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Kent on Sunday

www.kentnews.co.uk July 5, 2015
Mid edition No 667

WEATHER

Phew, what a scorcher!

Met Office says hot and humid weather is set for return

TRAVEL

Battle continues after airport report

War is far from over say Gatwick expansion protesters

EVENT

Preview of the Kent County Show

Your guide to next week's big event

OPERATION STACK

Chaos on our roads

Kent reflects on a week where French protest caused gridlock here

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Why crossing our fingers may be gridlock solution

THERE was a point on Wednesday where it seemed that Kent's roads were going to reach that mythical state of genuine gridlock.

With Operation Stack in full swing, with long stretches of the M20 being closed off on what seemed like an hourly basis, all traffic which the broad motorway would normally carry was being diverted elsewhere; primarily onto the A20 and M2.

So when crashes on both of those roads occurred just before rush hour, blocking already crowded roads, those in charge of our transport network will have felt the blood not so much coursing through their veins but bursting out of their ears in giant, volcano-like spurts.

Fortunately, somehow, the smashes were cleared and everyone (excluding the lorry drivers stranded on the hot motorway tarmac) limped home.

But it demonstrates that we are always perilously close to a traffic meltdown in this county. That the sheer volume of traffic creates so very little space for problems that a combination of congestion-causing events can push it perilously close to the brink of meltdown.

And we in Kent are vulnerable in all directions. If the Channel ports jam, so does the east of the county. If the Dartford Crossing closes, the north and west take the strain. Heaven help us if they both had to close at the same time.

As for solving the problem? Now that is the million dollar question. The answer is probably more likely to be the collective crossing of fingers.

Inside, we take a look at the huge financial cost of Operation Stack. We'd love to hear your thoughts on how to solve it too. So turn to our letters page and send us your views. Enjoy your weekend.

Editor **Chris Britcher**

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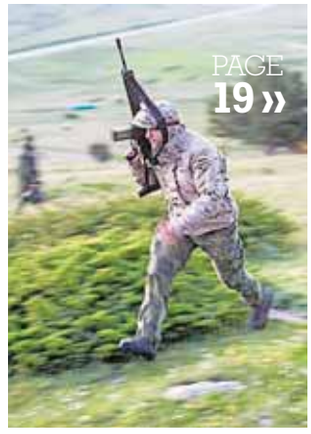

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seven days

Stories which made the headlines @kentnews.co.uk during the past week

Hot and humid weather set for return this week

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

PICTURESQUE: The coast is set to prove a big draw again this weekend as weather remains warm

THE soaring temperatures which left the county sweltering this week should start to ease today (Sunday) but forecasters warn the hot and humid conditions could be back.

Temperatures soared to the mid 30 degrees Celsius on Wednesday as an area of warm air from Africa and Spain came up on the jet stream to usher in the arrival of summer.

But it brought agony for many stuck in Operation Stack this week as striking French ferry workers blocked the port of Calais and caused chaos to the county's roads (see page 11 for full report).

Southeastern and Southern train services were told to slow down as a result of the heat by rail firm Network Rail, amid concerns the heat could lead to the tracks buckling. And health chiefs were quick to issue warnings to the young, elderly and vulnerable who may find themselves struggling to cope with the heat levels. It was misery too for those with hay fever and pollen levels soared.

But for all the problems caused, there was plenty to celebrate too with crowds flocking to the coast to enjoy the sunshine or the countryside.

The weather was set to break in dramatic fashion this weekend with thunder, lightning, the threat of torrential rain and warnings of some surface flooding.

While the temperatures will be around average for the next few days, with the Met Office predicting a mix of sunshine, cloud and showers, it seems we could be set to see it return by the end of the week.

A spokesman said: "On Tuesday there will be a band of rain moving eastwards across the country. There will be further showers on Wednesday, before becoming more settled across most parts going into the weekend with the south of the country likely to see some fine dry weather once again.

"Temperatures will be around or just below average through the period, though towards the weekend some very warm, humid conditions may return to the south and south east at times with a risk of thunder."

For all the latest news on how the weather is impacting on the county and any warnings, be sure to keep up-to-date with our website. Updated seven days a week, visit www.kentnews.co.uk and follow us on Twitter too for the latest update @kosmedia.

MEP slams claims that tourists may soon be banned from 'selfies'

REPORTS that Brussels wants to ban tourists taking photographs of world famous landmarks, such as Canterbury Cathedral, have been branded "scaremongering" by a south east MEP.

The reports were based on a debate due to take place this Thursday, based on 'freedom of panorama', which exists in most of Europe and means anyone may take a photograph of a public building or work of art, then use the picture however they want for personal or even commercial purposes.

But not every country in the EU has freedom of panorama - for example France, where images of the Eiffel Tower illuminated at night are protected by copyright, so photos of it may only be published with permission.

The story has been widely mistinterpreted as meaning tourists taking 'selfies' at famous landmarks would now be banned. In reality, it would only apply to those seeking commercial gain from the images.

South east MEP Catherine Bearder of the Liberal Democrats told KoS: "This is a ridiculous idea but has no chance of ever becoming law, it is only a non-binding proposal, by one MEP, picked up and blown out of all proportion by the UK press.

"While Ukip MEPs have been busy scaremongering, I have been working with other MEPs to amend this proposal and ensure freedom of panorama is explicitly protected by harmonised EU copyright laws.

"I'll be keeping an eye out to see if any Ukip MEPs actually bother to turn up when this is voted on next week."

South east MEP Janice Atkinson, formerly of Ukip but now standing as an independent, added: "As always, the EU interfering has unintended consequences. This is one of the most ridiculous pieces of legislation. Who is going to police it? We don't live in North Korea, yet. I will be voting against."

Murderer Tobin in hospital after face slashed in prison

SERIAL killer Peter Tobin, who murdered three woman and buried two of their bodies at his former home in Margate, has been attacked in prison.

The 68-year-old, who is serving three life sentences for murder, has been taken to hospital after having his face slashed in the attack on Wednesday. His injuries are not believed to be life threatening.

The serial murderer was convicted of killing Polish student Angelika Kluk, whose remains he buried beneath a church floor in Glasgow, Scottish schoolgirl Vicky Hamilton and Essex teenager Dinah McNicol.

The Scottish Prison Service said: ''We are aware of an incident.

''All assaults are reported to the police.''

Power station turbine hall to be blown up on Thursday

THE turbine hall at Kingsnorth Power Station will be demolished through a controlled explosion next week, it has been confirmed.

Energy firm E.ON, which owns the site, says it will be brought down in dramatic fashion on Thursday, July 9, at 1pm.

The 35m high turbine hall once housed the boiler and four 500MW turbo-generators.

Many of the smaller buildings at Kingsnorth Power Station have already been removed from the 1.6km-sq site but the turbine hall, due to its scale and visibility on the Medway skyline, marks a significant milestone in the demolition of the 2,000MW coal-fired plant. The power station closed down in March 2013. The 198m-high chimney still stands.

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seven days

Stories which made the headlines @kentnews.co.uk during the past week

Shark causes swimmers alarm in Herne Bay

SWIMMERS ran from the sea after reports a shark was spotted swimming close to the Kent coast on Wednesday - with some saying it was even a great white.

But experts poured cold water on the claims it was Jaws in the water - instead saying it was probably one of the more harmless, smaller, sharks which frequent the waters off the coast.

The alarm was raised in Herne Bay as temperatures soared for the hottest day of the year.

A spokesman for the coastguard said: ''This is quite early for shark sightings. This happens every year - people often mistake the bigger fish, like whale sharks, for something deadly. It is very rare for anything dangerous to be in the water in this country.''

Prince joins in Gurkha birthday celebrations to mark service to the crown

By Maria Chiorando
maria.chiorando@archant.co.uk

PRINCE Charles paid a special visit to Folkestone on Wednesday to help celebrate 200 years of Gurkha service to the British Army.

The Prince of Wales visited the base of the Royal Gurkha Rifles, which is also celebrating is birthday.

The royal visitor is colonel-in-chief of the regiment and patron of The Gurkha Welfare Trust.

He took time to meet families and serving soldiers as part of the anniversary celebrations.

Major Prembahadur Gurung, who hosted the special guest during the visit, said: "It is always a pleasure to welcome the Prince of Wales to our regiment.

"As Gurkhas, serving a long way from our homeland, we take pride in thinking of ourselves as a family. HRH has a long and friendly relationship with the Gurkhas. This visit allowed us once again to share with him our culture and traditions".

ROYAL: Prince Charles

The Royal Gurkha Rifles was formed in 1994 from the amalgamation of four previous regiments of Gurkhas.

Their history goes back to 1815, when Gurkhas first served the British crown. This year has seen a programme of celebrations in Nepal, the UK and India to mark the 200th anniversary.

For the Gurkha soldiers, royal recognition of their service and continuing loyalty remains a treasured boost. Corporal Hari Rai explained: "For the Prince of Wales to take the time to visit us is an honour. He spoke about our work and his sadness at seeing the effects of the earthquakes in Nepal."

Soldiers from the Folkestone-based battalion are now switching their focus to preparing to deploy to Afghanistan at the beginning of next year. The eight-month deployment will see the Gurkhas return to Kabul where they will protect the remaining UK troops, supporting the mentoring and training of the Afghan security forces.

The Gurkha community has become well established in Folkestone as well as nearby Ashford.

For a special feature on the use of reservists by the British Army, turn to page 19.

VIOLENT: Cuneyt Sungu

Jail for thug who stabbed his colleague

A THUG who repeatedly stabbed a work colleague during a violent attack in Tunbridge Wells has been jailed for 13 years.

Cuneyt Sungu, 33, left his victim suffering knife wounds to the stomach and chest following an assault near their workplace on the Colebrook Industrial Estate.

The pair had been involved in a disagreement on May 27, 2014, following a prank by Sungu who had put the victim's keys in a microwave oven. After finishing work, the victim, aged 27, met Sungu to resolve the matter but was confronted by him carrying a knife in a sheath on his belt.

The victim punched Sungu in the face in self-defence and ran away but was then pursued behind units at the rear of the industrial estate on Longfield Road.

Appearing at Maidstone Crown Court, Sungu denied a charge of wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm, claiming he had been provoked and acted in self-defence. He was found guilty by a jury following a trial and on July 2sentenced to 13 years in prison.

Detective constable Hayley Campbell said: "This could have quite easily ended up as a murder investigation and the sentence passed by the courts is a reflection of the level of violence used."

Helicopter service all set for Lydd take-off

TRAINING missions have begun at Lydd airport, prior to the launch of the civilian search and rescue (SAR) helicopter service later this month.

It will be based at the site - known at London Ashford Airport. The AgustaWestland AW139 helicopters in red and white HM Coastguard livery will take part in a number of training exercises, including night-time missions using advanced night vision goggles and stretching along the coast from Margate to Eastbourne.

Bristow Helicopters will operate the SAR helicopter service on behalf of HM Coastguard after being awarded the ten year UK SAR contract by the Department for Transport in March 2013.

Samantha Willenbacher, director of UK search and rescue at Bristow, said: ''This training is an essential part of our preparations. There will be short periods of time with high activity levels and we will make every effort to minimise disturbance. We would like to thank the local community for their patience and support.''

Teacher who had sex with student is jailed

A TEACHER who had sex with a 15-year-old pupil has been jailed for three years.

Kevin Rich, formerly of West Street, Gravesend, had been working at a Dartford school when he befriended the teenager. They exchanged messages via social media and then, last June, met and had sex.

He admitted three counts of abusing a position of trust and sexual activity with a child when he appeared before Maidstone Crown Court last month. He has now been sentenced to three years and four months behind bars.

Officer in charge of the case, Det Con Fleur Hardie, said: ''Rich preyed on a young girl who had been entrusted into his care.

''He completely abused the position he was privileged to be in for his own self-gratification. His victim and other witnesses have been brave in coming forward and helping us to secure this conviction.

''I hope the sentence will give the victim a sense of closure and allow her to move on with her life.''

Wetlands boost for RSPB nature reserve

PLANNING permission has been secured for what the RSPB say will be one of the nation's best nature reserves for wetland wildlife.

Permission has been granted to allow for clean sand, gravel and clay from construction and tunnelling work to be used at Cliffe Pools on the North Kent Marshes, in addition to the river dredgings already carried out.

The RSPB will use the excavated material to alter the depth and shape of the man-made lagoons, making them more attractive for wildlife, especially winter migrants and breeding birds such as avocet and common terns.

Project manager Sarah Cooper said: ''Cliffe Pools is already a great site for wildlife, but securing these consents allows us over the next few years to create a magnet for waders and wildfowl, which currently struggle to find suitable living space along the Thames. It shows that conservation and business can work together to bring benefits for both wildlife and people.''

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Snakes alive! Owner's appeal to find missing 10ft python

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

THE hunt was continuing this week to find a missing 10-ft python after it escaped from its owner's back garden.

The 11-year-old snake, called Zombie, slipped out of tattooist Chris Cini's garden in Larkfield more than a week ago.

And despite one reported sighting – and two false ones – the female coastal carpet python has still not been found.

Mr Cini, who owns another eight snakes, told KoS: "She is not interested in food – she is in season and that's why she is on the move. She is looking for a mate. Some people's perception of a snake is that it's the Loch Ness Monster out there. She is too small and timid to do anything to anyone."

The one confirmed sighting was when she was caught on camera slithering past the Larkfield Surgery in Chaucer Way.

Zombie slipped out of the garden of her Larkfield home over a week ago, and hit the headlines when a local girl snapped the snake going past the Larkfield Surgery in Chaucer Way.

Mr Cini added: "The local RSPCA have called me a couple of times now after they have had calls suggesting Zombie has been found, but they were both false alarms. One was in the middle of the night and was just a scarf. I am so grateful for the number of people who have been out trying to help us find her."

MISSING: Can you help find runaway carpet python Zombie?

The RSPCA is advising people who may come across the python or any other snake is to not actually approach it, but to call for help from an expert, just in case they discover a venomous variety.

The area around Larkfield is dense undergrowth, and with a snake's skin a natural camouflage specifically to keep it hidden in such places, finding her by chance is a huge long shot, said her owner.

He told us: "There is a huge area that needs searching, but even then, it will be easy to overlook where she is.

"If she can find even a little food, she could survive until around December.

"But her biggest enemy will be the cold. She loves warm weather of course, but as soon as a frost hits, it could be bad news.

"She is close to me and likes to lay close to me if we are in the garden together. She is a lovely pet."

Ashford tattooist signs up for scheme

SKIN Tec Tattoo Ltd has become the first studio in Ashford to be registered and inspected under the council's new Tattoo Hygiene Rating Scheme (THRS).

The studio in New Street received a 'very good' four star hygiene rating, which is the highest award available in the scheme.

Proprietor Mr Wright said He said: ''I would like to see the THRS as a mandatory scheme.''

Terry Wogan shoots TV show by seaside

LEGENDARY broadcaster Sir Terry Wogan was in Whitstable this week – shooting scenes for a new BBC2 food show.

The TV and radio star was filming Terry and Mason's Big Food Trip, alongside London cabbie Mason McQueen. They headed to the harbour where they tasted whelks and oysters.

Inflatable sea warning

LIFEBOAT crews are urging funseekers to take extra care before heading into the sea in an inflatable dinghy after a flurry of calls fielded by Margate RNLI.

Peter Barker said: ''People underestimate the dangers of setting out to sea in them. What seems like ideal conditions are in reality often ideal for being swept offshore by wind and tide.''

agenda

What will make next week's headlines...

Last chance to speak out on boundaries

YOU have just hours remaining to have your say on proposals to change county division boundaries across Kent - a move which will see a reduction in the number of county councillors.

Conducted by the independent Local Government Boundary Commission for England, the consultation ends tomorrow (Monday).

The commission's draft recommendations propose that Kent County Council should have 81 councillors, a drop of three.

The proposals mean those councillors would represent 65 single-member electoral divisions and eight two-member electoral divisions across the county.

To have your say and for more information, visit the website: www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk.

Exhibition into £100,000 environmental park plan

A CONSULTATION into plans to transform the derelict Environmental Park in Knole Park, Sevenoaks, will go on show this week.

Sevenoaks Town Council is proposing a £100,000 investment which would see the park transformed with new children's play equipment.

Negotiations for the funding are on-going.

An exhibition of the plans, first proposed last year, can be seen at the Stag theatre or Sencio leisure centre in the town from Monday, July 6, to July 31. Alternatively, you can views the plans online at www.sevenoakstown.gov.uk

...also

Celebrate Charivari Day

FOLKESTONE will explode in a riot of colour and noise next Saturday for its annual Charivari Day.

Held since 1997, hundreds of participants in costume will set off from The Stade and head through the town.

Race for Life at park

HUNDREDS will flock to Mote Park next Sunday for the latest Race for Life fundraising events.

There will be both a 5k and 10k event taking place, with all monies raised going to fight cancer.

MP opens B2B event

DAMIAN Green will officially open the Kent B2B event at the Ashford International Hotel on Tuesday.

The Ashford MP will speak at the leading business event and conference which is now in its 29th year.

Support your indies

GRAVESHAM Town Centre Management is supporting Independent Retailer Month throughout July and will be urging shoppers to buy at least one item from their local independent store.

It is part of a nationwide campaign.

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Swimmers scared by 'great white shark'

2. Operation Stack Misery

Full updates as they happened

3. Prison for Selfies?

The new EU proposal debunked

The Essential Guide:

Operation Stack

Essential information about the traffic measure as it was implemented for a second week

ONLINE GALLERIES: Check out www.kentnews.co.uk for regular special photo galleries, documenting the big events in the county including royal visits. Prince Charles visits Gurkhas in Folkestone to mark 200 years of service to the crown (see page 6).

All the news all week

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Top Three Blogs

1. The fall of Rafa Nadal

Has the once unbeatable Spaniard lost it?

2. Whitstable pretenders

Are the Islington mob taking over?

3. RSC hires amateurs

But is that fair on the professionals?

Results of the *KoS* Online Poll

Do you think Manston should still be an airport?

1	Yes	72%
2	No	27%
3	Undecided	1%

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MISERY: Striking French ferry workers at Calais forced the port to close, grinding to a halt the busy cross-Channel ferry trade. The queues then backed up for miles throughout Kent

Operation Stack lorry queues cost country £250m per day

As HGV freight park on M20 causes misery across the county, **Maria Chiorando** counts the cost...

THE chief executive of the Port of Dover has claimed the chaos caused by French strikers is costing the UK £250 million every day, with the industrial action causing the worst case of Operation Stack in decades this week.

Operation Stack, where sections of the M20 are turned into a lorry park to accommodate overspill freight traffic was implemented on Monday because of the strikes.

The strikes follow last's week events, which caused travel misery for thousands when workers took industrial action because of Eurotunnel's decision to sell two of its MyFerryLink boats, (formerly Sea France), to Danish operator DFDS, risking job losses.

MyFerryLink was due to stop operating on Thursday, when DFDS took over the bareboat charter for two of its ships.

But the Danish company said it had been unable to find agreement with the MyFerryLink workers co-operative, know as the SCOP, which would have saved 202 jobs for its members.

DFDS also stated that the two ships would not commence sailings immediately after they were taken over.

This means that the cross-Channel route will have two fewer ships, meaning that any backlog from Operation Stack is likely to take longer to clear.

MyFerryLink had wanted extra time to find a solution but on Monday a court in Boulogne dismissed its appeal which led to this new action.

Last week's strikes lasted for 36 hours and disrupted both the port and Eurotunnel, with blockades preventing both Le Shuttle and Eurostar traffic.

This week's action also shut the Port of Calais, as well as Eurotunnel and Eurostar, causing what one expert described as 'the worst case' of the operation since the mid or late nineties.

Donald Armour is the manager of international affairs at the Freight Transport Association (FTA), which is based in Tunbridge Wells.

"This is as bad as it's been for years," he explains. Sometimes you get bad weather, or a strike, but that usually wraps up after a few hours or a day. But when you have a situation like you have this week, with the Maritime Union and MyFerryLink workers, it will last longer.

"Compounding this is the large number of migrants looking for ways to get into the UK. With the trucks queuing, it is easier for them to climb on board. It's a real problem for the transport industry.

"This is difficult for the drivers, who want to protect their vehicles, but also their freight."

Many supermarkets will not accept a shipment if there are any questions about the supply chain.

If migrants have got into a vehicle, and possibly damaged the goods, the whole shipment could be wasted.

Mr Armour says: "It is a really expensive problem for the economy. Statistics from the Port of Dover suggest there are around 4,500 lorries going out and 4,500 lorries coming in per day - that's 9,000 lorries a day going through Dover.

"That's a lot of goods potentially wasted. You may have factories waiting for certain components, shops waiting for goods, or medical goods that are destined for hospitals.

"All these things can be held up. Goods can come in by air freight and containers, but there is a lot coming in via lorries.

"There will be people left seriously in trouble by this."

The FTA calculate that keeping a lorry stationary costs around £50 an hour. Phase 2 of Operation Stack can accommodate around 2,500 lorries.

"If you have that many lorries stationary for an average of five hours," Mr Armour explains, "That is 2,500 multiplied by £50, multiplied by five. That's £625,000 for five hours of Stack."

Tim Waggott, chief executive, Port of Dover, added: "The scale and prolonged period of disruption is bad for us all and it is bad for the UK too.

"The port handles trade to the value of £100 billion every year and every day that this situation in France continues costs the UK at least £250 million. That is simply unacceptable and incredibly damaging."

Some lorries will contain perishable goods that could be damaged, although many refrigerated lorries have separate engines for the fridges, they may not sustain the freight for the whole waiting time.

"Some of the spoiled goods may be covered by insurance," explained Mr Armour. "But it will be a case by case basis. If anyone wants to look to the French authorities for remuneration we would point them in the right direction."

STRIKE: The industrial action was carried out by MyFerryLink workers

HUMANITARIAN AID DELIVERED TO DRIVERS BY RED CROSS

AROUND 3,000 lorry drivers found themselves trapped on the M20 in Operation Stack in the searing heat when the mercury hit 35 degrees this week.

Kent County Council, with the help of partner agencies, delivered more than 18,000 bottles of water and 6,500 meals to lorry drivers

KCC staff led the collection of provisions,and Kent Police and Kent Fire and Rescue Service, with support of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, distributed them along the closed stretch of M20.

This was supported by help from KCC Community Wardens, the Red Cross, the Kent Voluntary Service in manning welfare points and providing refreshments to drivers in locations off the motorway.

KCC senior resilience officer Steve Scully said: ''These arrangements are part of the ongoing responsibilities of KCC during an emergency.

''We'd like to thank our partners for helping us to deliver the items and to Tesco for providing thousands of bottles of water.''

Freight drivers entering Stack were urged to ensure they were properly self-equipped with food and water to deal with the difficult conditions.

In addition to the food aid, Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) provided a dedicated crew of firefighters and a fire engine on the M20 within Operation Stack. The firefighters provided first aid including provision of a defibrillator, health and safety, and fast emergency response to deal with issues such as engine fires.

At one point on Wednesday, the year's hottest day, they were asked to assist with a lorry driver with a suspected heart attack, though it was a false alarm.

And the effects of Stack were not limited to those stuck on the motorway.

The traffic also caused problems for local health services, with staff and patients at William Harvey Hospital in Ashford and the Buckland Hospital in Dover experiencing problems getting to and from the hospital during the week.

FIGHT: Bosses of Gatwick Airport insist they will fight on in their bid to extend the West Sussex site, but for now it looks as though Heathrow will get the nod.

Gatwick fight continues despite commission picking Heathrow

Those living in west Kent under the flightpath of Gatwick say they are not celebrating just yet despite the findings of the Davies Commission. Meanwhile, government says expect a decision in the autumn

ANY hope that the pain of uncertainty cast by the long shadow of airport expansion would be resolved for affected local communities was shattered on Wednesday when the Airports Commission finally made public the findings of its report.

The much-feared Thames Estuary Airport may have long since dropped from a priority choice, but for those in west Kent, living under the flight path of Gatwick Airport remains a very real threat.

Economist Sir Howard Davies had been tasked by the Coalition government to examine the issue of aviation capacity in the south east and where best to expand.

Hot favourites were also extensions to Heathrow or Gatwick.

The West Sussex airport was keen to see an extra runway built to dramatically increase its operations.

But the report, to the surprise of few, recommended Heathrow get the nod. However, crucially, it said Gatwick remained a credible option.

With the Government now set to examine the report, it will be up to ministers to make the final decision.

And that means Gatwick could still get the nod, which will enrage those living under the current flightpath – who are already fuming over changes to that zone which they say has seen a dramatic increase in planes flying loudly overhead.

The Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign group said: "Thousands of people across Surrey, Sussex and Kent will be relieved that the threat of a second runway has receded.

"There will, however, be no rejoicing; uncertainty and blight remain. If the Heathrow runway goes ahead, we are only too aware of the misery which would be created there."

Kent County Council had originally backed the second runway - when it was primarily focused on seeing off the Thamess Estuary airport proposal championed by London Mayor Boris Johnson. But then opposed it too.

Matthew Balfour, KCC's cabinet member for environment and transport, said: "This will come as a huge relief for thousands of residents in west Kent. Kent would have suffered negative impacts in terms of increased aviation noise from more than a doubling of aircraft movements.

"Aviation noise in west Kent from Gatwick's current single runway configuration is already unacceptable and a potential doubling of this impact with a second runway would have been intolerable.

"This is a victory of common sense for residents and communities."

The Airports Commission released its final report on Wednesday morning, recommending building a third runway at Heathrow Airport.

Commission chairman, Sir Howard Davies, explained: "Over the past two and a half years, the Airports Commission has reviewed the evidence without preconceptions, consulted widely, and followed an inclusive and integrated process.

> **"At the end of this extensive programme our conclusions are clear and unanimous - the best answer is to expand Heathrow's capacity"**
>
> **Sir Howard Davies,** Airports Commission

"At the end of this extensive work programme our conclusions are clear and unanimous – the best answer is to expand Heathrow's capacity through a new northwest runway.

"Heathrow is best-placed to provide the type of capacity which is most urgently required – long haul destinations to new markets.

"It provides the greatest benefits for business passengers, freight operators and the broader economy."

He added: "Adding capacity at Heathrow also provides an opportunity to change the airport's relationship with its local communities as some overseas airports have done.

"To make expansion possible the commission recommends a comprehensive package of accompanying measures including a ban on night flights and a new noise levy to fund a far stronger and more generous set of compensation and mitigation schemes.

"And as there is no environmental or operational case for a fourth runway, the government should take action in Parliament to rule it out firmly and finally.

Transport minister Patrick McLoughlin says he will now consider the conclusions made in the report which was originally commissioned back in 2012.

Speaking in the House of Commons, Mr McLoughlin said: "The task is to balance local interests against the wider, longer term benefits for the UK.

"We will come back to Parliament in the autumn to provide clear direction to everyone on the government's plans. This is a vital moment for the future of our aviation industry. All those with an interest in this important question are expecting us to act decisively."

In total, more than 50 difference propositions were considered. It had been whittled down to three – Gatwick, Heathrow and possibly Kent's 'Boris Island' before that was finally ditched on grounds of cost and environmental impact.

In December 2013 the commission shortlisted three schemes for further consideration, two at Heathrow and one at Gatwick.

Sir Howard Davies said of the report: "The UK has the third largest aviation network in the world after the US and China.

"This is a detailed and comprehensive report, based on a significant volume of technical material, and the government will need to review our analysis carefully.

"The commission urges it not to prolong this process, however, and to move as quickly as it can to a decision.

"Further delay will be increasingly costly and will be seen, nationally and internationally, as a sign that the UK is unwilling or unable to take the steps needed to maintain its position as a well-connected, open trading economy in the 21st century."

Gatwick chiefs insist they will continue to push for the additional runway. Chief executive Stewart Wingate said: "Gatwick is still very much in the race. The commission's report makes clear that expansion at Gatwick is deliverable.

"We are confident that when the Government makes that decision they will choose Gatwick as the only deliverable option. This report highlights the very significant environmental challenges at Heathrow such as air quality and noise impact."

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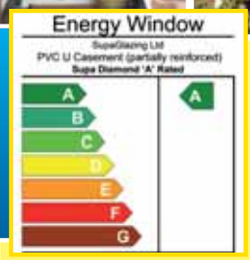

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Celebrate our farming and countryside life at county show

With the Red Arrows, high-profile visitors and a wide variety of entertainment and stalls, all is set for a weekend of showcasing Kent's best...

By Molly Kersey
molly.kersey@archant.co.uk

TENS of thousands of people are set to flock to the Kent County Show next week. The popular annual show marks a key event in the county's agricultural calendar, celebrating the cream of the rural crop and showcasing farming and countryside life.

Some 75,000 visitors attended last year's show – where they were able to see the best of the county's animals and view livestock exhibitions such as sheep shearing and goat milking.

The annual show takes place at the showground in Detling, near Maidstone, running from July 10 to 12.

And this year the three-day event promises to be better than ever, with a variety of displays, activities and workshops to keep visitors entertained.

So what can people expect from this year's show?

Show manager Lucy Hegarty explained: "The Kent County Show has listened carefully to visitors and now has more entertainment, displays and activities to make it a real value for money day out.

"We try very hard to give our visitors a unique experience and returning visitors find something new to watch each year, as well as returning to see their favourite displays.

"The show itinerary has now been finalised and visitors will have a huge number of programmed items to choose from.

"Not to be missed on Friday is RAF aerobatic display team, The Red Arrows. We are absolutely delighted to have this world-famous spectacle.

"The squadron will be flying over the Showground at 2pm."

There will also be a number of Horse of the Year show qualifiers hosted at the event.

New this year, visitors with an equine interest will be able to visit the Heavy Horse Village – where they will see a number of powerful horses in the specially built stable area.

The shire, working and Metropolitan Police horses are due to be stabled there.

"In previous years all horses have been stabled off-site, this year we wanted to give our visitors the chance to see some of the animals," explained Ms Hegarty.

"The heavy horses are without doubt an excellent choice, the preparation and dressing of the horses for competition is a spectacle in itself," she added.

"We hope visitors will take the opportunity to visit our new Heavy Horse Village."

The equine area has a full schedule of competitions, which will be starting at 7.30am and running through until the early evening.

ACTIVITIES: A wide variety are in store.

There will be three dedicated equine rings, where horses and ponies will compete to win rosettes, trophies or to qualify for the national Horse of the Year Show.

One of the attractions will be the Metropolitan Police Mounted Branch activity ride.

This will see police riders demonstrating their skills by removing and replacing their jackets, taking off the stirrup irons and finally the saddles while the horses continue to jump.

The horses are highly trained and when they are not taking part in displays they form a part of the Metropolitan Police Service - assisting policing in the capital by providing high visibility patrols in neighbourhoods and managing crowds at high profile events.

A number of family-friendly workshops will be held by Circus Whizz during the event, giving people the chance to learn how to juggle, spin plates or balance on stilts.

Free donkey rides will also be offered to visitors, and back by popular demand, Titan the Robot will be making an appearance too.

As with many outdoor events, the show is exposed to the elements and bad weather has wreaked havoc in the past.

Downpours at the 2012 event saw access to the site becoming a major issue and organisers facing financial losses.

However, work has subsequently taken place, with reinforced car parks hoping to pre-

VARIETY: Elements of farming and countryside life will be showcased at the event.

VISITORS: Thousands of people will make their way to the show.

vent any similar problems. What's more, the weather forecast is looking good this time around.

"According to forecasts the weather for the weekend is looking very promising for the host of entertainment we have on all three show days," said Ms Hegarty.

Last year's show was attended by the Duke of Kent, and this year high profile guests due to make an appearance include Adam Henson, of BBC's Countryfile. Mr Henson – who has earned himself the nickname of 'the nation's favourite farmer' – made his TV screen debut in 2001 and has since gone on to work on BBC Radio 4's On Your Farm and Farming Today.

He will be the guest speaker at the Kent branch of the Institute of Directors' breakfast meeting, which will be launching the show.

Other well-known guests making an appearance include Lord Gardiner of Kimble, Lords spokesman for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Kevin Attwood, chairman of Kent County Agricultural Society, which runs the event, said: "To have this group of guests for our opening day is outstanding."

He added: "Farming in Kent contributes a large amount of income to the county and having some of the most important figures in the farming world visit will give us an opportunity to highlight the hard work from our agricultural community."

As well as this, there will also be a large number of trade stands, which form a key part of the show.

Kate Excell, trade stand organiser, said: "Every year we have a wonder-

Continues on page 16

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JUMP: Equine fans will find plenty to enjoy at the weekend

Continues from page 15

ful mix of stands and this year will be no exception.

"The food stands in our food tent and those in the large Produced in Kent area prove to be very popular."

While some stands will have goods for sale, others will be providing displays or information for the visitors.

Hadlow College will have a stand at the event, and it values the huge importance that the show holds for people in the county – with a huge presence there every year.

Pat Crawford, spokeswoman for Hadlow College, said: "As one of the UK's leading land-based colleges – and a leader and voice for the county's rural sector – it is not surprising that the Kent show has a significant place in Hadlow College's calendar.

"The show enables the public to find out about the enormously important part farming plays in the county in relation to the economy, food, the environment and the landscape.

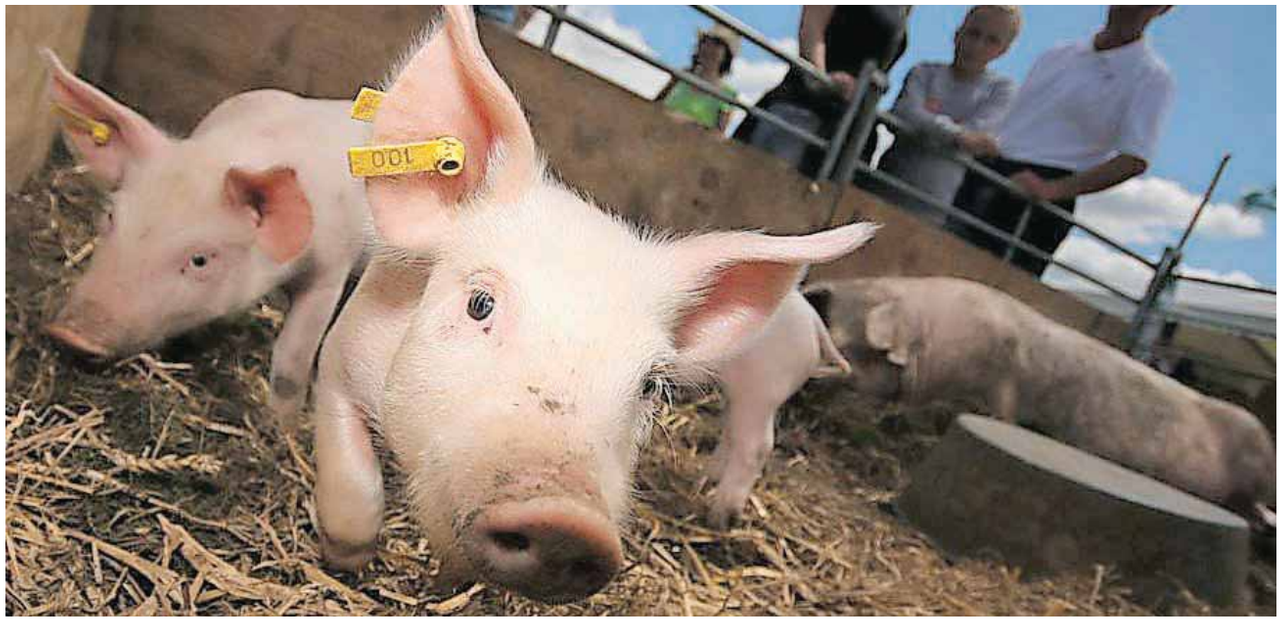
"The rural sector industries are big employers and Hadlow is proud to provide outstanding education and training."

Members of the Kent County Agricultural Society will be able to gain access to the new members' area this year – located between the Main Astor Ring and the Countryside Ring at the showground.

Mr Attwood said: "The new Maidstone Exhibition Hall is a wonderful addition to the Kent Showground and provides first-class facilities for our members.

"This extensive area has exclusive catering, restroom facilities and space for our members to fully enjoy their experience at the Kent County Show."

■ **For updates visit www.kentnews.co.uk. For a full report on the show, pick up next week's copy of Kent on Sunday.**



RURAL: There will be everything from farm animals to flower displays

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EXERCISE: The soldiers of 3rd Battalion The Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment (3PWRR) were praised by their Spanish full-time counterparts after their recent training exercise in the Pyrenees

New breed of reserves marching in step with regular colleagues

Despite huge funding cuts, the military is fighting back with its Army 2020 vision, writes **Jamie Weir**...

AUSTERITY has been the mantra of Conservative-led Governments since 2010, with cuts to many national and local services a painful by-product.

Among those left nursing deep wounds after the axe fell was the Minister of Defence (MoD). No stranger to fights, it has found itself unable to defend itself against cuts which are forcing the Armed Forces to operate on increasingly tight budgets.

But the British military is nothing if not resourceful. And its ability to handle anything thrown at it has ensured this is a battle it has no intention of being beaten by.

Today, as a result, it is moving towards a new strategic model – Army 2020.

First introduced after a strategic review in July 2012, Army 2020 will see regulars – full-time professional soldiers – reduced dramatically.

In fact, the number of regulars will fall by around one fifth, from 102,000 in 2010 to just 82,000 by 2020.

Rather than simply accepting a smaller, less capable force though, the military is looking to swell the reduced numbers through a new breed of reserve troops.

Formerly known as the Territorial Army, the Reserves will be fully integrated into regular units, which, by 2020, should number some 112,000 soldiers.

That means the reserves – for many years viewed as nothing more than a weekend fighting force – now have to raise their game in terms of fitness, professionalism, tactical ability and flexibility.

Canterbury MP, and minster with responsibility for the Reserves, Julian Brazier, says that he's confident the new philosophy is fit for purpose.

He told KoS: "At the heart of the future Army is the pairing of reserves with regular soldiers, and the two types working together.

"We need a more balanced Army, with a greater proportion of reserve soldiers. In the past we had many more reserves and a smaller regular force, and we are simply returning to that mixture of soldiers."

His passion for the reserve forces come from his experience as one of them. At 19 years of age, Mr Brazier joined the Territorial Army (TA) in 1972. He spent 13 straight years with them, five of which were as part of elite unit 21 Special Air Service (SAS), earning himself the Territorial Decoration for long service in 1993. He told KoS there were valuable reasons for more closely integrating reserves.

He said: "You get a wider connection to the civilian public by increasing reserves. That also means that you draw in civilian skills which may be relevant to the Army, but which it doesn't necessarily have.

"By increasing the reserves you also draw in innovation which may not have flourished so readily in the regular forces and that helps push the whole Army structure forward."

The Conservative MP said that the professionalism of the troops was in evidence from the recent reserve exercise in Spain by the 3rd Battalion The Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment (3PWRR) – at which KoS was also present. He said that the reserves were performing both there, and on other operations already.

Commanding officer of 3PWRR Lieutenant Colonel John Baynham agreed with Mr Brazier, telling KoS that work to transform reserve forces was already happening.

Lt Col Baynham said: "I've been in command of the battalion for two-and-a half-years and the difference has been astonishing.

"The equipment we've been given and the amount of uniform and everything else, you can't really tell the regulars from the reserves and they've demonstrated that they've really come forward an awful long way."

He said the reserves now offer so many opportunities for those joining, it has helped to encourage more people to sign up.

He told KoS: "We are now offering such a variety of activities for reserves that it's becoming a great place to be.

"We are pushing to give a great work/life balance, so offer a wide range of sporting activities for reserves, alongside professional training which can also help those joining us in their civilian lives and careers. We also have social events like battlefield tours, which aren't just interesting, but bring the men together.

"We are a particularly busy unit, contributing to operations at the London Olympics, in Uganda, and also in Iraq and Afghanistan. We currently have 24 soldiers deployed in Kabul helping to deliver officer training for Afghan forces. In the past, reserve troops were given tasks which weren't necessarily integrated with regular forces. Now, instead of working alongside these regular forces, the reserve soldiers are working as part of their team and with exactly the same responsibilities."

One thing which is a sure-fire way of bringing in professional ability is regular soldiers transferring to the reserves once they leave the Army.

That is the case with ex-Gurkha soldier Sanjay Ghale who now serves with 3PWRR. He spent 22 years with the Royal Gurkha Rifles – one of the most fearsome units in the British Army.

Continues on Page 20

'FIGHT LIGHT' IN ARMY'S ARSENAL

ONE of the new concepts espoused by the Army is known as 'fight light'.

The underlying idea is that soldiers shed unnecessary weight, taking only what they require into operations.

That means kit becomes tailored to the operation the soldiers are embarking on, with certain pieces of equipment left behind if deemed unnecessary.

The idea came into being after operational issues in Afghanistan, where soldiers were overloaded in difficult terrain, frequently ending up unable to manoeuvre when they came into contact with the Taliban.

The idea of fighting light is also to draw in new logistics methods, which give soldiers the ability to dump weighty equipment, but also have quick access to it if needed.

This has – to an extent – been made possible by the use of new technology. 3PWRR recently got the chance to utilise some of this kit when they were lent a fleet of new quad bikes complete with trailers to haul heavier items which may be needed.

Captain James Titchener from 3PWRR told KoS: ''The quad bikes are great as they allow us to move about faster to deploy kit to troops in the field, when and where it is needed. That means that soldiers aren't required to carry as much equipment on them, making them able to react faster and more easily to a situation. When you have soldiers who are already carrying a heavy rifle, ammunition, food, a helmet and other items, every bit of weight counts. The quad bikes give soldiers a bit more flexibility, and free them up to carry what they really need.''

COULD NATIONAL SERVICE BOLSTER ARMY?

WITH fewer regular soldiers in the Army, but no guarantee that reserves can take all of the strain, would compulsory National Service be an answer to any shortfall?

Fifth in line to the throne, Prince Harry certainly thinks so, calling for conscription to be reintroduced in May this year. He credited his time in the Army – during which he rose to the rank of Captain – as "saving him".

He said: "I dread to think where I'd be without the Army. Bring back National Service – I've said that before. But I put my hand up, as I said to the kids today, you can make bad choices, some severe, some not so severe.

"Without a doubt, it does keep you out of trouble. You can make bad choices in life, but it's how you recover from those and which path you end up taking.

"I've had an epic ten years, the Army giving me great jobs. I can never thank them enough for that,"

"The Army has done amazing things for me. And more importantly to me, what I've seen the Army do to other young guys.

"You know, I was a troop commander in Windsor for three and a half years, but I had 11 guys under my command.

"And some of those guys were – I mean naughty's not the word – they were on a different level. And their backgrounds and the issues they had.

"And then over those three years to see the way that they changed is huge, absolutely huge."

National Service grew during the two world wars, with men and women in a certain age range able to be called up by the Government. However, after the Second World War, the need for a conscripted army lessened and in 1963 the last National Servicemen left the Army.

Continues from Page 19

Sergeant Ghale chose to remain part of the British Army with the reserves after deciding to leave the regulars.

He told KoS: "I still wanted to be part of the Army, and thought this was a perfect way to keep doing something familiar and which I'm used to after leaving. I re-joined as a reserve straight after leaving the Gurkha brigade, and haven't looked back.

"It's great, as I've been able to continue training like I was doing before and am continuing to build my skills and all the while getting paid for it. It's great to keep doing something I love, but without the same level of commitment which is required from a role in the regulars.

"My experience with the reserves so far has been just as professional as with my former brigade. We're held to the same high standards regular soldiers are, and do the same exercises they would do. We get the same training and the same equipment which is fantastic."

And the Government is making it easier for former regular soldiers to join the reserves, with a streamlined process making it simpler and quicker for them to transfer.

Lance Corporal Scott Payne spent six years in the Army before leaving the service.

The 27-year-old said: "I spent time in various locations; Ireland and Cyprus as well as the UK and completed two tours in Afghanistan. When I left the Army I spent two years adjusting to normal life and then decided that I'd probably like to give it a go again; to help share my experiences with some of the junior lads and pass on what I can to the others."

All of the effort the Army is putting in to increase the reserves seems to be paying off, helping them become a more polished force than in the past – as was illustrated recently, when 3PWRR were on operation with elite Spanish mountain troops – the 62 Regimento de Cazadores de Montana – in the Pyrenees.

The man in charge of the Spanish soldiers, Colonel Salvador Madrano told KoS he wasn't able to differentiate between reserves and regular soldiers.

He said: "The British reserves I have worked with during the exercise are absolute professionals. I have seen British regular troops in action elsewhere in the world and these reserves have shown themselves to be immensely well trained.

"I cannot notice any difference between the regular soldiers and the reserves.

"It would be a pleasure to have the reserves back, and to work with them again. I'm confident we could fight together very well if the need arose in the future."

PRAISE: Col Salvador Madrano and Lt Col John Baynham joined forces

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Competition

Win tickets to final War and Peace Revival!

STEP back in time and visit Wartime Britain at the last ever War and Peace Revival between Wednesday, July 22, to Sunday, July 26.

Held at Folkestone Racecourse – what was formerly RAF Westenhanger – at Hythe near Junction 11 of the M20, the hugely popular event is ending this year and will be marking a number of anniversaries.

The show will be commemorating the 75th anniversaries of the Dunkirk evacuation and the Battle of Britain, plus the 200th anniversary of the Gurkhas' service to the British crown and the unforgettable 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

The revival allows visitors to re-live the atmosphere of the Second World War with action-packed battle re-enactments, living history displays, arena events, classic civilian and military vehicles, military models, vintage fashions, a funfair and the songs, sounds and smells of wartime Britain – it's a great day out for all the family!

And this year's final show will be featuring the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight and Great War Display flying teams performing at the weekend. And don't forget there's the chance to meet and dine with the stars from TV's hit show 'Allo 'Allo!

There is an exclusive and exciting opportunity to join one of six original cast members of the popular 'Allo 'Allo! series at a table of just 10-people at the John Miller Orchestra dinner and dance on the Saturday night. Dressing up is encouraged! Choose your favourite star by selecting Area when booking online.

To find out more about the event and to buy tickets, visit www.warandpeacerevival.co.uk (pre-booked tickets get a 10% discount).

And that's not all, Kent on Sunday has teamed up with the organisers to offer one lucky reader the chance to win four adult tickets to the show as well as four 'Allo 'Allo! VIP tickets.

To win, all you have to do is answer the following question:

■ **This year marks which anniversary of the Battle of Britain?**

a) 65th
b) 85th
c) 75th

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The promoter's decision is final. Usual terms and conditions apply. Please note if you should enter after the closing deadline of Tuesday, June 30, 2015, your entry will not be valid, but you still may be charged. SMS services are provided by BBA Digital Helpline Telephone 0844 3572403.

Alternatively enter by post to The War & Peace Competition, Archant KOS Media, Suite 104 Kent House, Station Road, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PP.

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In advance of our usual October Open Week we are holding extra dates during the summer. I look forward to welcoming you.

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Headteacher

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-oOo-

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ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE IN A RURAL SETTING

Get outside with our festival guide

If Glastonbury made you yearn for entertainment in the great outdoors, check out these Kent events...

DID Glastonbury make you crave for some outside entertainment? Praying for sunshine and enjoy entertainment, food and drink? Then look no further... here are ten of the best festivals or outside events for you to still enjoy right in Kent.

This year is the first where regular events such as Lounge on the Farm and the Hop Farm Festival are not on (Lounge returns next year, the Hop Farm Festival is no more), but there's plenty to still get excited about, including a number of events pulling in some big name performers:

What: Kent County Show
Where: Detling, nr Maidstone
When: July 10-12
Web: www.kentshowground.co.uk
Adult price: £18.50-22

For many people, the Kent County Show is the must-attend event on the summer calendar – and for plenty others, the must be-seen event too. Showcasing the agricultural backbone of the county, across the three days there will be stalls and entertainment and plenty of competitions from everything from vegetables to live stock to flowers. Still nursing its wounds from when bad weather struck several years ago, it is now back in rude health.

What: Dartford Festival
Where: Central Park, Dartford
When: July 18-19
Web: www.dartford.gov.uk
Adult price: Free

This council-run event has developed an enviable reputation over the years, offering up a full two-days of entertainment and all for free. This year's event offers up a host of big names, among them The Selector, From the Jam and The Feeling. Plus plenty more. Perfect for families, the headliners are on stage at a yawn-busting early evening to ensure all is done and dusted before it gets dark.

What: War & Peace Revival
Where: Folkestone Racecourse, Westenhanger
When: July 22-26
Web: www.thewarandpeacerevival.co.uk/
Adult price: £17.55-19.50

For more than 30 years, the War & Peace Show has been a traditional high point on the county's calendar – but this year could be the last ever.

Having switched from its long-time home at Paddock Wood's Hop Farm, the event is now staged at Folkestone Racecourse.

Bringing a blend of history and entertainment, it showcases military equipment, re-enactors and plenty of educational opportunities too.

CROWDS: If the sun shines, the county knows how to put on an event in style

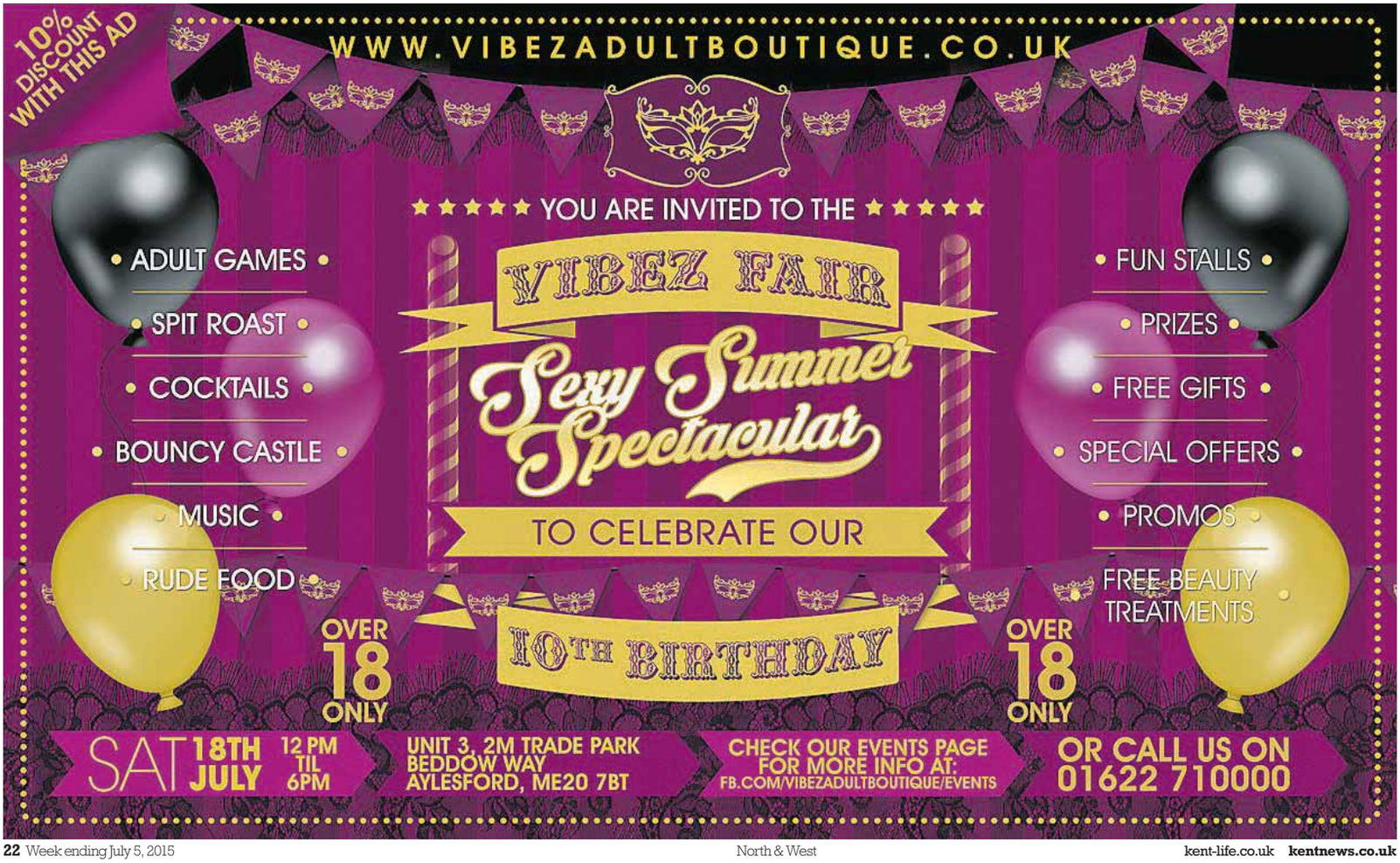
What's more, it pulls in phenomenal crowds.

This year, though, long-time organiser Rex Cadman says he is retiring, and unless someone steps in to take over the event, it will bow out after this year's event.

What: Ramblin' Man Fair
Where: Mote Park, Maidstone
When: July 25-26
Web: www.ramblinmanfair.com
Adult price: From £115 weekend ticket.

In the absence of the Hop Farm and Lounge on the Farm, Ramblin' Man has become the county's big name festival this year, with an impressive looking line-up of rock for the denim and leather-clad fan.

From the likes of the Scorpions to Marillion, Seasick Steve to Saxon



HISTORY: Whitstable Oyster Festival serves up a wide range of events and attractions for visitors

and Blue Oyster Cult to Gregg Allman, it may well establish itself as an annual event if this year's show delivers.

What: Whitstable Oyster Festival
Where: Whitstable
When: July 23-August 2
Web: www.whitstableoysterfestival.co.uk
Adult price: Free-£various depending on event

Each and every year, the Whitstable Oyster Festival grows in stature and is now well established as a destination pulling in crowds from across the south east. From its traditional roots of blessing the oysters as they arrive on the beach to be distributed throughout the town on a horse-drawn cart, the event now features a host of arts and crafts to enjoy while you take a stroll around the town's picturesque harbour.

What: Create Festival
Where: Victoria Park, Ashford
When: July 26
Web: www.createfestival.co.uk
Adult price: Free

Now in its 20th year, Create has been slowly but surely developing a reputation as that rarest of things - a free event which delivers some genuine star quality as well as acting as a showcase for a host of local talent.

And this year is arguably its biggest yet. With a ticketed event featuring Supergrass frontman Gaz Coombes at St Mary's Revelation on the Friday (already sold out), the big day is Sunday where undisputed punk-pop legend Adam Ant will be performing as headliner in Victoria Park. Also on the line-up is Mark Morriss - former lead singer of the Bluetones.

What: Forgotten Fields
Where: Eridge Park, nr Tunbridge Wells
When: August 7-9
Web: www.forgottenfields.co.uk
Adult price: £95-105 weekend.

The organisers of the long-running and successful Kendal Calling stretch their wings and set up shop on the Kent/East Sussex border with an impressive line-up and a snug 4,000 capacity. Big name performers include Basement Jaxx, The Levellers, Super Furry Animals, De La Soul and Razorlight. All in all, it

packs a decent punch and could prove to be the surprise summer hit. With five stages plus a cinema it offers plenty.

What: Smugglers Festival
Where: Great Mongeham, near Deal
When: September 3-6
Web: www.smugglersrecords.com
Adult price: Day tickets - £28. Weekend and camping- £80

For the last five years, the Smugglers Festival has developed a reputation as a family-friendly gathering showcasing a diverse range of music offering everything from folk to psychedelia, world music to hip-hop.

Showcasing, among others, acts on Smugglers Records' own label, the event is set in four acres of fields and woodland near Deal

Acts performing this year include Cocos Lovers, Sura Susson Family Band, The John Langan Band and Will Varley.

What: High Definition Festival
Where: Hop Farm, Paddock Wood
When: September 5-6
Web: www.hdfest.co.uk
Adult price: From £35 day tickets - £70-115 weekend.

Not blessed with good fortune thus far, this two-day dance music event will be the only major music event at the Hop Farm this year, following the collapse of the Hop Farm Festival. Originally scheduled to take place in July at Eridge Park, near Tunbridge Wells, organisers were forced to move the dates back to September, but are still anticipating a top event.

What: Faversham Hop Festival
Where: Faversham
When: September 5-6
Web: www.favershamhopfestival.org
Adult price: Free

Just as the schools return, comes this final hooray and celebration of the summer. With its roots in the old hop-picking days, on which the local area is built around, this pulls in the crowds with a mix of live music in and around the town centre, car displays and, of course, the chance to sample plenty of beer. More than 50 bands will be performing along with a fairground, street parades and nearly 60 stalls.

Former Mission Hall suitable for conversion for a variety of uses subject to planning.

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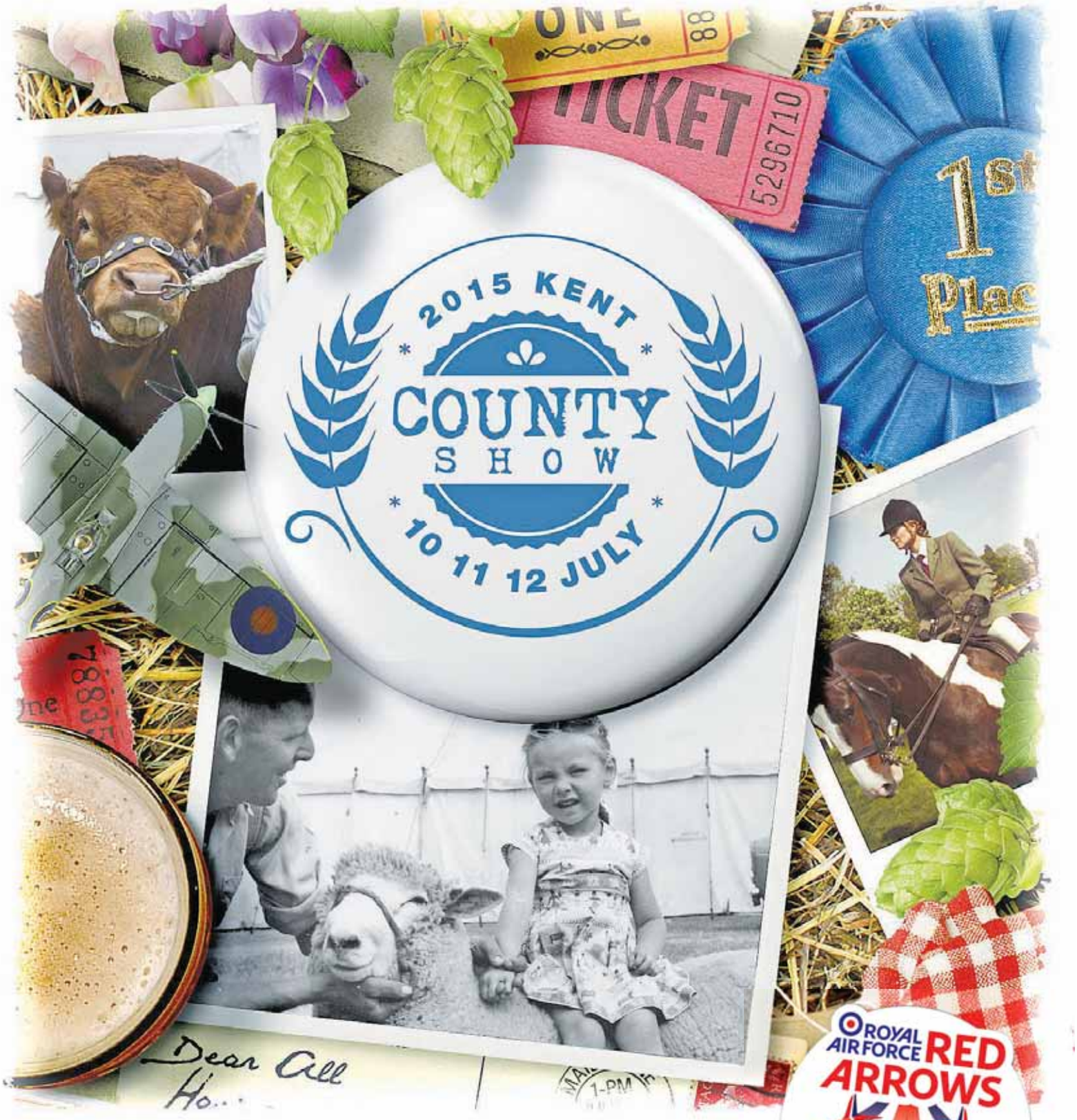

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>
> **Glenn Whitehead,** from Swanley, who witnessed the deadly attack

ATTACK: Islamic State's deadly attack in the holiday resort of Sousse left 38 people dead – some 30 expected to be British – and was the worst terror attack on British citizens since the attack on 7/7.

Aftermath of Tunisian massacre

The deadly attack in the holiday resort of Sousse left 38 people dead and many more injured. As those caught up in the tragedy - including holidaymakers from Kent - try to return to their lives and normality, **Sarah Linney** and **Maria Chiorando** highlight their plight and the repercussions

ONE minute holidaymakers were relaxing on the beach in the Tunisian resort of Sousse – the next, they were fleeing for their lives as machine gun bullets flew around them in the worst terror attack on Britons since 7/7.

Dozens of people died in the unexpected attack on June 26 by gunman Seifeddine Rezgui, who was just 23.

Last weekend stunned victims, including two couples from Kent, evacuated home from Tunisia told of their horror of being caught up in the attack by the Islamic State supporter.

This week, defence secretary Michael Fallon, who is MP for Sevenoaks, claimed it was 'illogical' for Britain to take part in bombing campaigns against Islamic State, in Iraq but not, however, in Syria.

And on Thursday, it was announced 12 suspects had been arrested in connection with the attack and that Tunisian security forces were still hunting for two men suspected of having trained in Libya with gunman Seifeddine Rezgui.

Among those on the beach on June 26 were Glenn and Anita Whitehead, from Swanley, who at first thought the shots they heard were fireworks

"He was shouting something, I don't know what," Mr Whitehead, a scaffolder, told the Guardian.

He shouted at his wife to run, as bullets flew around their heads and a person next to them fell dead.

Mrs Whitehead tripped in the sand, but somehow the pair managed to get to the safety of a hotel.

When they went back outside, there were bodies in the foyer and by the pool, and blood everywhere.

"I looked around the beach and all I could see were dead people covered in towels," said Mr Whitehead.

"Where we were lying were a German mother and daughter. When I got back one of them was covered over, dead."

Also caught up in the attack was Nicole Harris, from Sheppey, who was on holiday with her boyfriend David Schofield.

She told ITV: "People said there were police on the beach with guns. We didn't know what was going on, so it was a scary moment."

Mr Schofield added: "It was just complete confusion, no one knew what was going on. It almost looked like a fire drill with everyone ambling out the place.

"It was like no, actually, something bad is happening and it's close you could tell by the sound. It's so cliched to say you never think you would be involved in something like that but it has shaken us up."

Ms Harris added: "It could have been us."

At the time of going to press 38 people had died as a result of the attack, including 30 British victims.

Speaking earlier this week, Michael Fallon said that there had been no warning of the attack.

> Let us mourn for the victims, weep with the bereaved, support the injured and pray to the God who in Jesus went to the cross and died rather than bearing a sword.
>
> **The Most Rev Justin Welby,** the Archbishop of Canterbury

"All our thoughts have to be with the family and friends of those who lost their lives," he said.

"The government is doing everything it can."

Terror experts warned the UK could now be hit by an attack any day, especially as Monday marked a year since Islamic State established their caliphate in Syria and Iraq.

The Sousse massacre followed hot on the heels of an incident at a chemical factory in France and a bombing in Kuwait.

Dr Afzal Ashraf, a consultant fellow at the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies, warned: "The timing of the atrocious attacks in Tunisia, France and Kuwait suggests that these events could have stemmed from the same motivation; to mark the first anniversary of the forming of the caliphate."

Gunman on the beach Rezgui was shot dead by police after the attack, but he is thought to have had accomplices, and Tunisian interior minister Najem Gharsalli said a "significant number" of other people had been arrested.

In the UK, more than 600 police officers and staff are now working on Britain's response to the incident, which Assistant Commissioner Mark Rowley, the National Police Chiefs' Council lead for counter-terrorism, said was "likely to be one of the largest counter-terrorism deployments since July 2005".

He added: "Because of the scale of the attack, the number of deaths and the international nature of it, it is likely several hundred police officers and staff will be working on this case for some time.

"Since Friday evening, more than 380 officers have been at British airports to support travellers returning from Tunisia and to help identify potential witnesses."

Among other things, witnesses will have to give statements about what happened to support inquests.

"We have deployed 16 officers to Tunisia, including senior detectives and forensic officers from New Scotland Yard's Counter Terrorism Command, as well as family liaison officers," Mr Rowley added.

"They will be joined by more specialist counter-terrorism officers in the coming days.

"In Britain, 60 family liaison officers are with relatives of those who were killed and injured. They will be supporting victims and their families as part of the police investigation."

Among those expressing sadness at the attack was the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Most Rev Justin Welby said: "All of us must be full of grief at the attacks in Tunisia, France and Kuwait.

"They are intended not only to destroy but to divide, not only to terrify but to take from us our own commitment to each other in our societies.

"Let us together mourn for the victims, weep with the bereaved, support the injured and pray for them all to the God who in Jesus Christ went to the cross and died rather than bearing a sword.

"Facing such a global and long term menace we are called to reaffirm our solidarity with each other and affirm the great treasures of freedom, in religion and so many other ways.

"Our strength is in the God who conquered evil when Jesus rose from the dead, and on His death and victory we find the basis for our future."

And on Wednesday, at Prime Minister's Questions, Gillingham and Rainham MP Rehman Chishti called on David Cameron to officially start calling the terrorist organisation known as Islamic State by the name 'Daesh' – as it was neither a state nor was it Islamic.

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CREATIONS: From left, clockwise, St Pancras, Buckingham Palace, Olympic Park, Macy's Parade and the Queen parachuting into the London 2012 opening ceremony

Lego: Building blocks of life-like replicas of famous monuments

An exhibition opens this weekend in Maidstone showcasing remarkable works created by little bricks

FOR generations, the appeal of Lego has endured; the brightly coloured building blocks stretching the imagination and providing a strangely agonising item to step on in bare feet when your children or grandchildren leave them on the floor.

But while you may have spent time building houses, castles, cars or spaceships, there are plenty of others who use the bricks to re-create remarkable structures, modelled on real life places and people.

And one of the finest Lego artists is going to bring a host of his breathtaking creations to the county this week for a special exhibition in Maidstone.

Brick City opens this weekend at the Maidstone Museum & Bentlif Art Gallery and runs until September.

Among his creations will be faithful reproductions of the Olympic Park in London, the front of Buckingham Palace during the royal wedding and even the annual Macy's Parade which takes place through New York.

What's more, there will be a local flavour too, with a Lego version of Maidstone United's Gallagher Stadium on show too.

Explains a spokesman for the museum: "Brick City is our major summer exhibition of architectural landmarks made out of Lego bricks.

VISIT: The exhibition at Maidstone will last throughout the summer holidays and also includes a specially commissioned model of the Gallagher Stadium

"There will be around 60 models of iconic architecture and sights, from the Trevi Fountain in Rome to Copenhagen's Little Mermaid, from the Arc de Triomphe in Paris to Macy's Parade in New York, and of course nearer to home, with Nelson's Column, Battersea Power Station and the Olympic Stadium included.

"One of the largest pieces with over 120,000 bricks is St Pancras Station designed to celebrate the architecture of George Gilbert Scott. The station is fully working in that each of the six platforms can be used and the trains run in and out. It has been on display at events throughout Europe and draws a huge crowd each time."

Brick City is the creation of Lego artist Warren Elsmore who specialises in unique, memorable and exciting installations and events using the famous little bricks.

With many years of experience in both the business and Lego communities, he is a published author, his first two best-selling books are both accompanied by touring exhibitions.

The spokesman added: "Visitors will be able build their own Lego model and add it to the scene of award-winning Mote Park, or they can contribute to the Lego mosaic of Spike, our learning team's iguanodon mascot, a modern-day take on Maidstone's iconic coat of arms."

The event runs from July 4 to September 6. Admission is £4 for adults, £2 for under 16s. A family ticket for two adults and three children is £10.

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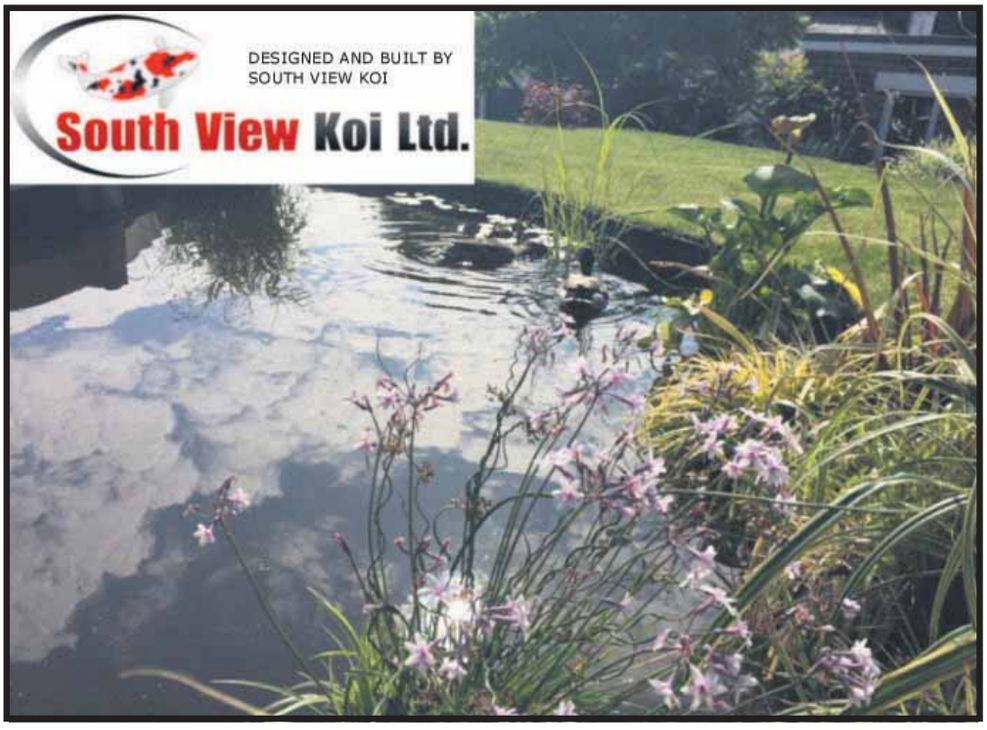

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GLORY: The Hadlow College designers join staff and former miners at the Green Seam – their award-winning garden which dazzled at Hampton Court this week

Hampton Court glory for garden inspired by our mining heritage

Hadlow College students dazzle in the sunshine at prestigious garden show in London this week...

STUDENTS from Hadlow College have been celebrating after scooping two of the top awards at the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show this week.

The Green Seam garden was designed by Stuart Charles Towner - who called the win a 'dream come true – and Bethany Williams, both students on the Garden Design BA (Hons) course at Hadlow College.

It tells the inspiring story of hope, endeavour and rejuvenation behind the Betteshanger Sustainable Parks project.

It reflects its past as a coal mine and how it is set for a new lease of life.

Attending the event with the designers and college team were former Betteshanger and Tilmanstone miners, Terry Harrison, Gary Cox, John Kemp, who are involved in the work to deliver the Kent Mining Museum; part of the new park.

Having been awarded a gold medal in the show garden category, the judges went on to present the Green Seam team with the blue riband 'Best in Show' award for the category.

The judges described it as: "Quite simply a show stopper, with a unique and moving story".

One of the designers, Bethany Williams, said: "This is my first show garden and I am speechless at what we have achieved. Green Seam was a true team effort. We were so lucky to have amazing contractors in RDC Landscapes who were not fazed by anything we threw at them, including asking them to build a 15 metre long wall from coal spoil."

Set in rural east Kent, Betteshanger offered few job prospects for the former miners despite the promises of successive governments. In 2011, Hadlow College was invited to develop a plan to boost local skills, aspirations and innovation, which led to the £40 million Betteshanger Sustainable Parks project.

Mark Lumsdon-Taylor, director of finance and resources at Hadlow Group, which operates Hadlow College and Betteshanger Sustainable Parks, said: "I am delighted that Green Seam has not only won a RHS Gold medal but also the Hampton Court best show garden award.

"For the first showing in five years, it marks a fundamental achievement and recognition of the importance of the vision and significance of the Betteshanger Sustainable Parks scheme."

The garden features a black wall representing the coalface; coal pillars depicting the miners and their heritage and a lift cage symbolising the miners' daily descent below ground.

TREAT: The hugely popular show was blessed with blue skies and warm sunshine this week as the green-fingered showed off their hard work

CHEERS: Park will be replanted at the Betteshanger park it highlights

MINING A ONCE BOOMING INDUSTRY

IN NOVEMBER 2013, Hadlow College announced it was to push ahead with a £40m scheme to redevelop the site of the former Betteshanger Colliery.

Originally closed in the late 1980s as part of a wide-ranging reduction in the number of working coalmines - a decision which sparked the notorious miners' strike - it had remained as a poignant reminder of an industry in east Kent that has long since died.

But Hadlow was determined to breathe new life into it.

Its landmark scheme, which has taken four years of planning and preparation, will be a UK first and comprises a green technologies sustainable business and commerce park, world class research and development supported by education and a new national visitor destination for over 100,000 visitors in a sustainable energy and mining heritage park.

It is anticipated that this will result in approximately 1,000 jobs within east Kent and an increase in tourism to the region.

The college has been supported in the project by Kent County Council, Dover District Council and the South East of England Development Agency, all of whom initially funded the feasibility study into the Betteshanger project. Work got under way in spring 2014 with the initial development including the visitor, heritage and energy complex.

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RESEARCH: House prices across the south east are rising at the same rate as those in central London and it means sellers are benefiting but buyers are having to find more money for their homes

Region's house prices rise at same rate as those in London

Sellers benefit from high demand but first-time home buyers are left struggling, writes **Jamie Weir**...

HOUSE prices across the south east are rising at the same rate as in central London, with City dwellers looking to cash in on higher salaries by living a more suburban lifestyle – and taking to commuting.

The most recent Land Registry statistics show that the annual change in house prices in the south east between May 2014, and May 2015 was 9.1 per cent.

That puts house price growth on the same level as in London on a yearly basis.

Monthly house price growth, however, saw the south east overtake London, with houses trading 0.9 per cent higher compared with the capital's growth of just 0.7 per cent.

One reason given for the elevated level of growth is that London residents, tired of the expense of living in the capital, are looking to leafier surroundings for their base.

High speed rail travel has meant that large chunks of Kent are now closer than ever to London, with commuting from even the furthest reaches of the county's coast a possibility.

Research compiled by online estate agent eMoov.co.uk showed that as demand for property increased by nine per cent over the past three months, London's commuter belt shot up the most.

Traditional commuter hotspots like Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks were popular, but unexpectedly, Medway saw the biggest increase with a 63 per cent rise in demand.

The area – which includes towns like Rochester, Chatham and Gillingham – has also witnessed a significant rise in demand since the second quarter of 2014, with a 70 per cent increase in demand for property over the past year.

The research used data which recorded the change in supply and demand by analysing the number of properties sold in comparison to those on sale.

Founder and CEO of eMoov.co.uk, which conducted the research, Russell Quirk, said: "It's interesting to see the demand for commuter zone property continuing to grow.

"With London demand falling, property owners wanting to see an increase in their property price, might want to sell up and head a few miles out of the capital."

That influx of former London homeowners is pumping up prices across the county according to Kent Developers Group (KDG) chairman Nick Fenton.

Mr Fenton – who as chairman of the KDG represents the interests of 25 major developers in the county – said that price rises could be explained by a struggle to meet high demand.

He told KoS: "It's fairly simple really. The market is being driven by two primary things; supply and demand.

"There are a number of people who are choosing to buy up houses at a time when we aren't building enough. That's creating a crunch in supply, with housebuilders trying to keep up with demand, but unable to.

> **"Dartford, Ebbsfleet and Sevenoaks are going to continue to draw people in, as they offer the best of both worlds... close to London and you get more for your money"**
>
> **Nick Fenton,** chairman of Kent Developers Group (KDG)

"Many parts of the west of the county which are traditional commuter hotspots, places like Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells, are still proving incredibly popular for housing.

"New developments in those areas tend to be in high demand, and it looks likely that there will continue to be significant growth in almost all areas which have good connections to London.

"Places like Dartford, Ebbsfleet and Sevenoaks are going to continue to draw people in, as they offer the best of both worlds. People who buy there are still close to London and get more for their money.

"The various developments like paramount Park at Swanscombe and the Ebbsfleet Garden City will draw more people to the north of Kent."

Traditional commuter hotspots aren't the only areas seeing prices jump up though, with large tracts of east Kent – not traditionally considered commuter belt – tracking the market rises.

Those jumps in prices aren't great for everyone though, with first-time buyers wrestling with increases as they struggle to get on the property ladder.

Sarah Jones is one of these buyers. She told KoS that saving a deposit for a new home in Deal has been a long process.

She said: "It's as though the goal posts keep moving. With prices constantly rising it has taken help from my parents, as well as diligent saving with a big chunk of my salary going towards a deposit each month. It has taken quite a while to get into a position to buy.

"I know a lot of my friends don't think they'll ever be able to get on the housing ladder, as prices just keep going upwards.

"Something needs to put a brake on these rises, as otherwise the so-called 'generation rent' are never going to be able to buy a house."

The price rises in the south east have led the average cost of a home to soar to £246,552.

That's the second highest price in the country, only beaten by the London average which is a mighty £475,961 for the average house.

Toby Caufield is a director at east Kent estate agent, Colebrook Sturrock. He told KoS that a number of factors are likely to have played a part in the price rise across areas he covers.

Mr Caufield said: "Firstly, I don't think the market is overheating. Gains which have been made recently are likely to be for a number of reasons.

"In east Kent, we have historically been under-valued, and significant rises in that area can be attributed to those places catching up with the rest of the south east."

Investment for the future also figures high on Mr Caufield's list of reasons for strong house price growth in Kent.

He said: "London market inflation has left a number of homeowners with spare equity.

"Some may well have used the cash to snap up holiday homes in parts of Kent which are easily accessible by rail and by road.

"An expansion of the buy to let mortgage market has also meant a greater number of people have been able to access property as a future investment, and a place to park their money as a retirement fund.

"Employment prospects are also great down here, with more high quality jobs, at places like Discovery Park, and some strong economic growth."

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HOPS: There were hop farms throughout the county.

History of those who travelled from London to the countryside

Molly Kersey examines the tradition of hop picking and the trains that brought workers to county...

THE hop is Kent's most famous crop, and a key part of the county's heritage.

Introduced back in the 16th century, thousands of acres of hop farms spread across the area.

These farms were situated in locations all over the county, including villages such as Tudeley and Minster in Thanet.

"Originally there were only one or two and then it built up," explained former chairman of the British Hop Association, Tony Redsell – who farms extensively in Faversham, Canterbury and Thanet.

"The biggest acreage in the UK was 77,000 acres in 1870.

"I think they were grown in about 30 counties in the country."

And with these hop farms came a need for a large workforce to help give them the care and attention that they required in order to thrive.

Hops are widely used for the brewing process.

The addition of hops in this process means that the beer can be kept for longer, as well as adding bitterness into the flavour.

These hops ripen in late August to the middle of September, when they are ready to be picked.

The hop bines needed to be stripped and required a certain amount of care and attention, needing encouragement in order to climb.

Whereas now this can be done using machines, before the 1960s a large workforce of hop pickers were needed to help pick the hops from the bines.

For people from the capital, this was a chance to get away from city life and earn extra funds by working in the hop farms.

As the summer drew to a close, thousands of people from London would descend on to the Garden of England, relishing the chance to breathe the fresh country air.

"If one takes it at its peak whole areas of London would just move out into the countryside," explained Mr Redsell.

"To begin with there were no railways so they had to walk from wherever they lived out into the hop growing areas.

"They got to the first one and if they were lucky and got in there fine, but if they didn't they had to walk on to the second or the third, so they probably would have been rather foot-sore."

With the dawn of the railways came the opportunity of easier and more comfortable travel for the hop pickers, and train loads of people used to arrive in the county to get to work.

The Kent & East Sussex Railway was constructed between 1900 and 1905 and it linked Robertsbridge on the Hastings to London line with Headcorn on the Folkestone to London route.

Tenterden and various villages along the route were then joined to the national railway system.

Specially timetabled trains were run from London to bring the hop pickers over to the hop gardens – where they had the opportunity to earn useful cash as well as enjoying what might be their only opportunity for a holiday.

By the 1920s, the Southern Railway was carrying more than 30,000 hop pickers and their families over to the hop gardens each season.

From the 1930s the Southern Railway trains worked through on to the Kent and East Sussex Railway with just a change of engine.

In 1937 three trains brought in 4,106 people from London through to the Bodiam area, but by the 1950s the number of people needed dropped to some 2,000.

"From the mid-19th century the railways started to move people about and so it became much easier for them to get here," explained Mr Redsell.

"The Hop Pickers Special would travel from London Bridge. It was a bit more business.

"A lot of people and a lot of freight were moved through the country in those days."

The trains would transport people from London and through the county, all the way to Bodiam station in nearby Sussex.

The pickers would mainly be women and children, and sometimes they would be with their elderly relatives.

While the work was undoubtedly gruelling, with children working long shifts along with their adult relatives, it was viewed positively by many as a welcome escape.

At the weekends, special trains called Hop Pickers Friends would run in order to transport husbands and fathers across to visit their families – they would generally stay behind in order to keep bringing in money with their jobs in London.

The hoppers would have stayed in huts while they were working, sometimes for up to six weeks, having to share toilets and cooking facilities.

Vic Grigg is a volunteer for the Kent & East Sussex Railway.

He said: "It was mainly people from the East End of London, including my own grandfather and his family.

"They used to bring families down every September.

"It was always the second weekend in September that they started, and it could go on for three, four or five weeks depending on how the hops were growing.

"My grandfather brought my father down before the Second World War, and they all stayed in a very small hoppers hut.

"There was at least four or five of them and they all slept in a single bed. So it was cosy!"

"After the war it started to change a bit. I was only a young lad after the war and I never actually got to go hop picking.

"I was quite annoyed because the kids I went to school with used to have six weeks school holiday and then had another holiday in September, so they got nine weeks holiday whereas I only got six, and I felt very hard done by."

In his Hop Picking Diaries from 1913, prominent writer George Orwell wrote about life working in the hop fields in Kent.

It reads: "The most successful pitches are families, who have two or three adults to strip the vines, and a couple of children to pick up the fallen hops and clear up the odd strands.

"The laws about child labour are disregarded utterly, and some people drive their children pretty hard.. but they like the work and I don't suppose it did them more harm than school."

He adds: "Most of us slept in round tin huts.. with no glass in the windows, and all kinds of holes to let in the wind and rain.

"There were uproarious scenes in the village on Saturdays, for the people who had money used to get well drunk.. I have no doubt that the residents thought us a nasty vulgar lot, but I could not help feeling that it was rather good for a dull village to have this invasion of cockneys once a year."

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Please note if you should enter after the closing deadline of Tuesday, June 28, 2015, your entry will not be valid, but you still may be charged. SMS services are provided by BBA Digital Helpline Telephone 0844 3572403.

Alternatively enter by post to Battle of Britain Airshow, Archant KOS Media, Suite 104 Kent House, Station Road, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PP, including your answer, name, address, postcode and contact telephone number.

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SUCCESS: Brigid Coady has been given a special honour on her regular train

6.37am service to Maidstone gets own writer

For most commuters, the trip to and from the city is one which involves catching up on sleep or listening to music. Others read books. One, however, wrote an award-winning novel instead

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

A COMMUTER who wrote her first novel on her iPad while travelling by train to work has been named writer in residence on the 6.37am Southeastern service from London Victoria to Maidstone East.

Brigid Coady wrote her romantic novel No One Wants to Be Miss Havisham while going to and from work in Kent.

During her daily hour-long journey, the 43-year-old busily tapped away on her tablet while listening to music on her headphones.

Now her novel has been published by HarperImpulse, an imprint of HarperCollins, and has won the Joan Hessayon Award for New Writers.

Recently, she emailed Southeastern to highlight her achievement, joking she is an unofficial writer in residence. Now the train company has decided to make it official.

Ms Coady, who lives in Pimlico, central London, said: "I have always wanted to write a novel and the train seemed like the ideal place to sit down, collect my thoughts and write my first book."

The project manager, who works in Maidstone, came up with the idea for her book in 2009. At first, she wrote it as a short story, but an editor said it was worthy of a novel.

So, as other commuters around her stared out of the train window at the Kent countryside, read the newspaper or had a quick snooze, she set to work.

After writing away morning and evening she settled on a finished version of her work – which is over 80,000 words long – last February.

The story is inspired by Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol and follows Edie Dickens, a divorce lawyer who doesn't believe in love and the idea of there being a happily ever after style fairy tale ending.

Haunted by the ghosts of weddings past, present and future, she must change her ways before her best friend's wedding, or end up being damned to an eternity watching others' happiness.

The book was published as an e-book in May and a hardback edition is due for release this August. The author is now writing her second novel, whilst commuting on the same train to Maidstone East.

She said: "We all say 'I would do X if only I had the time' but it's about finding those little pockets of time that can be used to really follow our dreams. There's no way I could have finished my book without using that time on my commute sitting at my table and writing."

Barbara Thomas, passenger services director for Southeastern, added: "We want to congratulate Brigid on the publication of her first book and winning an award.

"It's great to hear stories of how our passengers spend their time on their commute and it is clear that Brigid used her commute very constructively.

"We were happy to announce her as writer in residence on this service."

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RURAL: The Rural Services Network says it is widely accepted that those delivering services to scattered rural populations face significant extra costs

Rural areas losing out to urban sites as funding cuts bite deep

Report reveals the disparity in money for services for those living in the countryside and in towns...

RURAL councils in Kent are struggling to pay for services as government spending cuts continues to dig deeper into budgets.

The news comes after a report discovered it is parish council areas that are feeling the pinch more than urban authorities.

Penned by the Rural Services Network, a group of more than 200 organisations working together to improve the delivery of rural services across England, it makes grim reading.

Analysing national figures, it calculated fire and rescue services in urban areas get over a third more in government grant funding per head of population than those in rural areas. Doctors and the NHS are also underfunded by hundreds of millions a year across the UK. It's the same story with the police, it said.

Its Rural Fair Share campaign seeks to encourage the government to address the ongoing disparity in funding between rural and urban areas. It brings together members of both Houses of Parliament, along with organisations, community groups, and individuals concerned about the welfare of rural communities, calling on the government to close the funding gap between rural and urban councils.

Among the network's member councils are Dover, Shepway, Ashford, Tunbridge Wells, and Sevenoaks. It said: "People in the countryside are continuing to get a raw deal on essential public services because government funding unfairly favours larger towns and cities."

They said countryside communities are losing out on important funding for services such as adult social care, public health and schools – as well as the NHS, police and fire and rescue services.

Rural Services Network chief executive Graham Biggs MBE, admitted: "The south east, and of course Kent, don't do as badly as some parts of the country, But things could be better – everyone could do with more money."

Barbara Flack, the chairman of Blean Parish Council near Canterbury, is desperate not to let reduced budgets damage their public services too much. In her annual report, she said they have met with Kent County Council to discuss their plight over the care of highways, footpaths, pavements and signage.

She said: "Budget considerations are always paramount at the moment in any discussions due to a very restrictive budget at KCC due to government cut backs and also the parish council's desire not to raise the precept, which is the parish part of the council tax, to an unacceptable level."

She said a budget restriction with the highways department has "led us to explore alternative manpower for the clearing of the paths".

This year, the parish put up its precept by 33p per year for a typical Band D property. It is trying to make do with around 70 per cent of what it need.

Mrs Flack said: "This has solely been to allow the parish council to continue to give the same level of service as the previous year." She added it is also being hit by rises in cost of insurance, wages and service charges.

> **"It is widely accepted those delivering services to scattered rural populations face very significant extra costs but the funding formulae fail to reflect this"**
>
> **Graham Biggs,**
> Rural Services Network

The parish remit includes litter picking, maintenance of seats, play equipment, grass cutting, hedge cutting, tree maintenance and some vegetation cut back.

She told us: "I am sure some people on parish councils just want to give it all up. We are volunteers but I am determined to carry on and do what we can for our community."

Dr Hilary Newport from the local branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural Kent (CPRE Kent), said it would back any campaign to provide more money for rural communities.

Often a lack of social infrastructure can make the required longer journeys more intolerable for those forced to travel further for routine services.

She told us: "As always, CPRE happily support the provision of improved access to local services, including local schools, post offices and shops, so that rural residents don't have to travel long distances to meet basic needs."

Ian Pointon, chairman of the Kent Police Federation, which represents rank and files officers, told us: "I know the people who live in rural areas will feel cut off from the police as patrols in those areas are reduced thanks to all these government cuts to rural budgets.

"Already, we are closing front counters of police stations in more urban areas, so anything in a rural area will find things are much worse.

"Response times will increase as patrols have to travel further to reach someone in need. If these cuts continue every year, then we will end up seeing a 1970s level of service in the 21st century.

"We realise the need for lower spending, but cutting police budgets can have a knock-on effect no one will want to see or experience. For the last five years I have been warning these cuts would have consequences.

"It may get better once the government balances the books, but it is easy to cut the number of police officers, and much harder and more time consuming building the numbers back up again."

Jenny Hall is the community halls advisor for all of Kent, and is based at Action with Communities in Rural Kent. She told us: "There are 400 village halls in Kent, and many are falling in to disrepair because there is no funding from parish councils, district councils or government.

"Each of them have around 20 user groups and if the cost is put up too much to pay for repairs, the number of groups dwindle and the hall budget has another hole when they pull out one by one.

"It is a difficult situation, but we are doing all we can to keep these important local community hubs open."

Mr Biggs from the Rural Services Network said the formula used to calculate what each region receives is "fundamentally unfair – the system should take full account of higher service delivery costs in rural areas".

He said: "It is widely accepted that those delivering services to scattered rural populations face very significant extra costs but the funding formulae fail to properly reflect this.

"It is not just so-called 'super sparse' local authorities and other service providers which must meet substantial additional costs; all predominantly rural and some significant rural authorities and service providers must do so."

The figures to put it 'right' are huge, as a recently introduced £15.5m rural services delivery grant to reduce the disparity between town and country for some local government services was worth just £1.10 per head in those rural authorities receiving it.

Mr Biggs said: "In 2012 the government increased the allowance for sparsity in the local government formulae and exemplified a gain of £247m to 170 rural authorities by that move. However, in the final settlement, some 75 per cent of that was lost."

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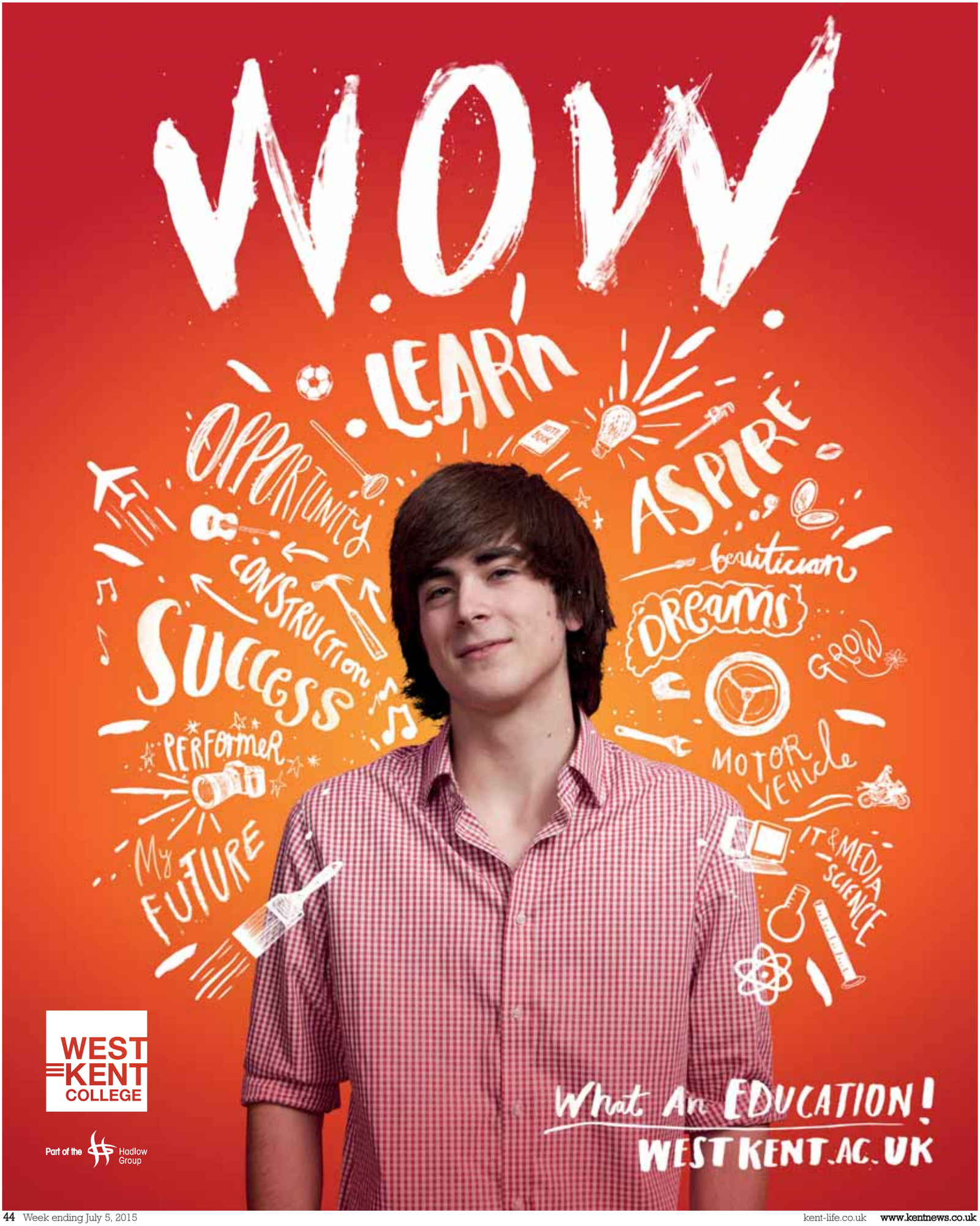
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HISTORY: The show will be telling the story of the Incredible Invaders and Groovy Greeks.

Greek and Roman times to be brought to life once again

Writer Terry Deary talks about the stage shows inspired by his best-sellers

BIRMINGHAM Stage Company will be bringing their new Horrible Histories stage shows to The Orchard Theatre, Dartford, later this month.

Incredible Invaders and Groovy Greeks are aiming to entertain people of all ages, delving into historical events such as the first ever Olympic Games and the Roman invasion of Britain.

The shows will be performed in the county from July 23 to 26.

The shows have been written and directed by Neal Foster and they are inspired by the books created by best-selling author Terry Deary.

Speaking about the books and his inspiration for writing them, Mr Deary explained: "Nobody had done anything like them before and they filled a desperate need.

"There were fact books for children but they tended to be written by experts on the subject.

"They knew their history but they didn't have a clue how to write about it for children.

"So with Horrible Histories, instead of an expert who couldn't write, they approached a children's author who knew nothing about history.

He added: "I know very little about history because I can't keep it all in my brain.

"I get all my facts from research.

"I do my research and say 'you will never guess what I discovered' and 'phwoar, this is great'.

"I say I am not an expert in history and this is why they work."

However, Mr Deary insists that there are key differences between the books that he has written and the shows that will be performed on the stage.

He said: "We are not trying to write literary stuff.

"It isn't the books on stage, we are not determined to be true to the spirit of the books, we are writing for theatre.

"So it is fresh and original."

The shows will feature actors and 3D special effects.

And it is hoped that they will be able to both entertain and educate their audiences.

And Mr Deary said that the collaboration had been successful.

"We work really well as a team," he explained.

"Birmingham Stage Company actor and director Neal Foster is very knowledgeable and experienced in children's theatre.

"Birmingham Stage Company has been going more than 20 years now.

"I have been a professional actor for 40 years. So, between us, we know what we are doing."

Writer and director Neal Foster has been enjoying the challenge and bringing the history to life.

He said: "I had a hugely exciting time bringing the Groovy Greeks to life in Horrible Histories-style and loved shining the spotlight on Celtic, Roman, Saxon and Viking life in Incredible Invaders.

"Both shows feature special amazing 3D effects that provide a spectacular way for both children and adults to enter these extraordinary historical periods."

For more information about Incredible Invaders and Groovy Greeks, or to book tickets to the show, you can visit www.orchardtheatre.co.uk.

Alternatively, you can call the ticket office on 01322 220000.

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Women Seeking

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GORGEOUS flower, Ashford Kent, 51, larger lady, large personality, easy going, seeks male who likes dogs, animals for relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417435**

AMANDA, 36, tall, slim, busty brunette seeks man, any age, any area, for discreet daytime fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 4292 Box No: 418117**

FEMALE, 59, GSOH, many interests, seeks caring male for fun friendship maybe more, genuine calls only. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4819793**

GILLY, voluptuous well groomed lady, seeks man to massage and pamper. **Tel No: 0906 515 4293 Box No: 412933**

FEMALE easy going, kind, loving, genuine, romantic, car boots, gardening, seeking male with GSOH. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417603**

ANN, young looking 40yrs seeks broadminded man of any age/location for no strings discreet times, games and more. **Tel No: 0906 515 4294 Box No: 412369**

SUSIE fit, friendly, looking for someone to love and look after me, preferably, older, N/S male with own car. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 392537**

ANNA, busty mature lady seeks no strings discreet meetings with male any age or location. **Tel No: 0906 515 4295 Box No: 366019**

HAPPY young looking lady, 62, likes socialising, conversation, seeking nice man to share good times with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407383**

KATIE, 5ft 5, slim dark hair, very attractive female, likes most things in life and a good laugh, looking for a similar male. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4722127**

NICE female looking for decent genuine male for friendship to start out with. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4710874**

BLONDE female, 5ft 1ins, size 12, likes meals out, drinks, nights in, walks, seeks male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409025**

JAN 63, young at heart, petite, 5ft 2ins, brown hair, blue eyes, GSOH, likes cooking, countryside, travel, days out, seeks easy going male, 60-70. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416349**

ATTRACTIVE lady early 50's, petite, Scandinavian blonde professional, WLTM professional, caring gent, 50-60's for attention and future together. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416569**

JAN 63, young at heart, petite, 5ft 2ins, brown hair, blue eyes, GSOH, likes cooking, countryside, travel, days out, seeks easy going male, 60-70. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416349**

ALISON 39, petite with long brown hair, hazel eyes, very loving, seeking similar male for an uncomplicated relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416517**

ALISON 30, pretty, slim with long brown hair, fit and active seeks fit older male for energetic relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416497**

DEBORAH 41, intelligent brunette, lovely brown eyes, discreet, many interests, seeks similar male to share fun and good conversation. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416515**

JANINE 36, faithful, sincere, will never stray seeking similar male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414629**

ATTRACTIVE black, athletic lady, varied interests, seeks similar white, old fashioned, genuine male for relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416215**

MAY sexy black African female, 38, hardworking, seeks generous friendly male for mutual rewarding friendship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416211**

SUE young at heart, good looking, enjoy life, socialising, beach walks, gardening, theatre, seeking male, 55-65 to share life with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416171**

JACKIE 32, attractive professional, very smart and feminine, long brown hair, seeks smart, confident, older male who knows how to treat a lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416297**

BECKY 23, classy blonde, long blonde hair, blue eyes seeks loving older guy to spoil and pamper her. Discretion assured/guaranteed. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416233**

LINDA 26, cheeky, curvy brunette, a little shy at first, likes to look after herself, seeks dark haired male for discreet naughty but fun times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416195**

TERESA 39, petite, cuddly and bubbly seeks kind older male to travel, have fun, and take care of, pamper and flirt with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416081**

LUCY stunning tall brunette, looking for exciting times, seeks like-minded, adventurous male who is willing to try anything once or maybe even twice! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416079**

PETITE blonde, blue eyes, very feminine and sensual seeks younger male for friendship and discreet fun. Can accommodate. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416077**

SARAH 29yr old pretty slim single mum of one, interesting, lively, good fun, enjoys nights in/out, music, seeking similar easy going, genuine, honest man/dad to get to know. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415841**

ANGIE attractive nurse 39yrs, new to area/advertising, likes dog walking, being sociable, meals in/out, WLTM honest, fun male for possible ltr. looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415827**

LISA attractive petite Filipino female, very lonely, wanting to find love, companionship and to be happy, looking for friendship and more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415549**

SUE 65, 5ft 8ins, blonde hair, fashionable, smoker, GSOH, enjoys meals out, travel, animals, WLTM kind, shyish man for friendship, maybe more. Thanet area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415735**

BLONDE female, 47, looking for fun, sensual, experienced, understanding, seeking similar. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415675**

MANDY 35, petite attractive slim female with very GSOH, likes to keep fit, meals in/out, WLTM genuine child friendly guy/dad for fun times together. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415513**

INTELLIGENT funny guy without a huge ego required for damaged heart. Casey 39, size 10, curves in all the right paces, pretty, kind, loving, genuine, romantic and available. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415509**

BLACK lady 43, sincere, down to earth, fun loving, likes theatre, cinema, meals out, walks, seeking white gent with GSOH, sincere and down to earth. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415477**

JENNY voluptuous blonde tanned well-presented female, enjoys being and giving pampering, cooking, cosy nights, looking for some broadminded excitement. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415399**

JOYCE 39, attractive GSOH, loves nights out, honest, loyal, fun to be with, looking for mature male for adult companionship, meals out and hopefully more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415561**

NICOLETTE 32 petite professional attractive black female looking for similar hardworking white male who like me loves life and is serious about finding a LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415545**

PAT blonde blue eyed curvy, cuddly female, attractive, likes swimming, gardening, holidays, my job/home, looking for happiness with quiet content grounded male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415533**

JACKIE very pretty leggy well-mannered/educated 28yr old female, loves nights in/out, sports, WLTM sincere male up to 35yrs for friendship, hopefully ltr. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415377**

DONNA 36yrs un-modest but very attractive, nice eyes, good figure, GSOH, OHAC, great job, sick of never meeting Mr Right, looking for someone special. Genuine male please. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415187**

ALISON 27yr old very bored broadminded female with plenty of free time on her hands looking for some adult fun times. Call me, I won't disappoint. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415177**

DEE lonely divorced female, slim, bubbly, attractive redhead, loves cuddles, looking for a man who can restore my faith in love and make me laugh. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414961**

Men Seeking

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MALE widower, N/S, likes reading, walking, WLTM lady 50-70 for friendship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418173**

COME dine with me. Attractive black British male 50 yrs, 6ft, medium building, working, GSOH, romantic and genuine WLTM similar female. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4763687**

PETE 49, slim, 5ft 7in s, smoker, creative, likes art, live bands, outdoors, seeks similar female for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416421**

PAUL 52, seeks loving female for exciting times, meals out, weekends away, cosy nights in. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418077**

MALE widower, N/S, seeks buxom lady, 50-70, likes reading, 60's music, pub quizzes and crosswords. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417905**

PROFESSIONAL, romantic male, 44, likes meals out, cinema, music, holidays, seeks female, 30-55 for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 250195**

PAUL 48, 5ft 8ins, GSOH, likes music, cinema, seeks female for fun, friendship and LTR. Tunbridge Wells. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 371985**

PAUL GSOH, 5ft 8ins, medium build, seeking Miss Right for LTR to put the spark back into life. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 391970**

PAUL 49 5ft 8ins likes eating/nights in/out seeks loving female for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 404013**

MALE 71, Tidy, OHAC WLTM Lady late 60s early70s for easy friendship. Likes animals. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4757205**

YOUNG 60yr old male, knows how to treat a lady, seeking special lady to spoil for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417909**

GOOD looking fit male, romantic kind and passionate, with lots of love to give WLTM a mature lady 55 to 65 for LTR. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4760779**

MICK 50, seeks attractive female for nice times out, genuine calls only. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417691**

ROAD worker looking for fun times and hopefully more. Great sense of humour. Laughs a lot. Looking for the same in lady. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4753610**

ROCKABILLY guy, seeks rock chick, 25-50 who likes 50's rock music and bands. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 284750**

CARING man enjoys going out, looking for someone to take out and have a laugh and to share some nights in! **Text only to Mailbox No: 4736191**

ANDY 5ft 5ins, retired, 69, solvent, likes most things, meals out, holidays, golf, swimming, GSOH, seeks female. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417821**

67YR old male, slim, 5ft 5ins, many interests, likes holidays, meals out, seeking slim female 55-65 with GSOH to share TLC. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414023**

BARRY 47, 6ft, well built, seeks female for wining, dining and fun times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 361787**

VINCENT 48, 6ft, well built, seeks lady for fun nights in and out. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 377397**

48YR old divorced male, 6ft, well built, seeks lady for fun and laughter. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380789**

HAPPY go lucky divorced man, 48, 6ft, well built, seeks gorgeous female to share love and laughs with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383719**

GARY 48, 6ft, well-built, dark hair, brown eyes, seeks passionate female for fun times in and out. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 387175**

49YR old male, 6ft, well built, seeks female to wine/dine and have fun with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 390929**

HARRY 50, ex soldier, 6ft, well built, seeking lady to wine and dine. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417015**

HAPPY go lucky guy 62, GSOH, seeks fun loving lady, 48-65 for coastal walks, lunches and fun days out. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417707**

BRIAN 71, likes meals out, drinks, nights in, music, walks, seeks female with similar interests. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417697**

MICK 50, seeks attractive female for nice times out, genuine calls only. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417691**

ROCKABILLY guy, seeks rock chick, 25-50 who likes 50's rock music and bands. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 284750**

BRIAN 70, Maidstone, seeking female, 60 plus, likes meals out, cinema, theatre, days out and cosy nights in. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410611**

JACK 47, tall, good-looking, average build, GSOH, seeks broadminded female for discreet no strings fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416867**

MIKE Canterbury mature male, seeks single mum/lady, 28-42, slim-medium build for loving, caring relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415275**

BRIAN 70, Maidstone, seeking female, 60 plus, likes meals out, cinema, theatre, days out and cosy nights in. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410611**

ED, retired Essex guy, astute & wise. N/S. no ties, with looks & humour seeks younger female needing life's mentor/tutor. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4485189**

CHIPS on the pier, walks on the beach/countryside, VGSOH, 58yrs old, fit male, seeks female for laughs and love and whatever. NE Kent. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411725**

GENUINE fun sexy healthy guy 55, with no ties, looking to date attractive lady 45/57 for fun times and more. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4717147**

GARETH handsome 40's pilot, strong tall build, seeks daytime discreet passion with lady 30-65. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414421**

KIND, tall, medium build, smart, easy going widower, 71 WLM Lady 60s early 70s, for easy going friendship OHAC. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4641218**

MALE, attractive, kind, loyal, gentle, no ties, looking for kind, gentle, small lady for friendship and LTR. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4711124**

DOVER male 54 seeks female for friendship, conversation and maybe more. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4682630**

STU 52, looking for a sincere women to share the long winter nights with. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4609904**

KEEN cyclist 58, non competitive, seeks similar female for sea wall, countryside ride, walking etc for fun, laughs and whatever. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413337**

FEMALE pillion passenger sought for motor cycle rides / adventures and anything else good/bad. Any age/status, 59yr old male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416827**

LOCAL Sevenoaks man, seeks local lady for fun and friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417127**

GRAHAM tall, semi retired, Piscean, likes sailing, seeks female, any nationality. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415463**

MALE 46, wishes to meet female of similar age for fun, friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415923**

PETE 49, slim, 5ft 7in s, smoker, creative, likes art, live bands, outdoors, seeks similar female for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416421**

HARRY 50, ex soldier, 6ft, well built, seeking lady to wine and dine. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417015**

BARRY divorced, 6ft, well built, seeking fun time girl for good times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412717**

MALE blond hair, blue eyes, seeking female with GSOH, 45-60. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416445**

Gay Seeking

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GAY male 54 years old, seeks gay male 40 to 42 years old for 121 long lasting relationship. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4732986**

BI male, slim, passive, seeks older bi M, 75- 90, for gentle fun and friendship. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4398888**

MAIDSTONE bi male, clean-shaven, N/S, seeks similar bi male, N/S for meetings. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416737**

PASSIVE male, 60, overweight seeks assertive male for daytime fun, cannot accommodate. **Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4321273**

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Dalai Lama's translator is due to give public talks in Medway

by Maria Chiorando
maria.chiorando@archant.co.uk

THE Dalai Lama will celebrate his 80th birthday on July 6 - and events held to mark the day will be taking place in Kent.

Ven Ringu Tulku Rinpoche, translator for the Dalai Lama, will be giving public talks in Medway on July 6 and 7.

The visit is being arranged by a local Buddhist group – Bodhicharya Kent – which was founded in 2013 by Ringu Tulku Rinpoche.

The group meets every Tuesday at the Quaker Meeting House in Rochester.

The visit will include two public talks to be held at Sun Pier House in Chatham between 6.45pm and 10pm each evening.

On July 6, guests will enjoy welcome food, drinks, music and poetry offered by the local community later in the evening.

The event will also be doubling up as the official launch of Bodhicharya Kent by Ringu Tulku Rinpoche.

Bodhicharya is an international, non-profit association founded by Ringu Tulku Rinpoche, an eminent Buddhist teacher.

It started in 1997 with the creation of Bodhicharya International in Belgium and since then it has developed into a world-wide network of people, projects, centres and organisations found in 35 locations and 13 countries.

The latest addition will be Bodhicharya Kent.

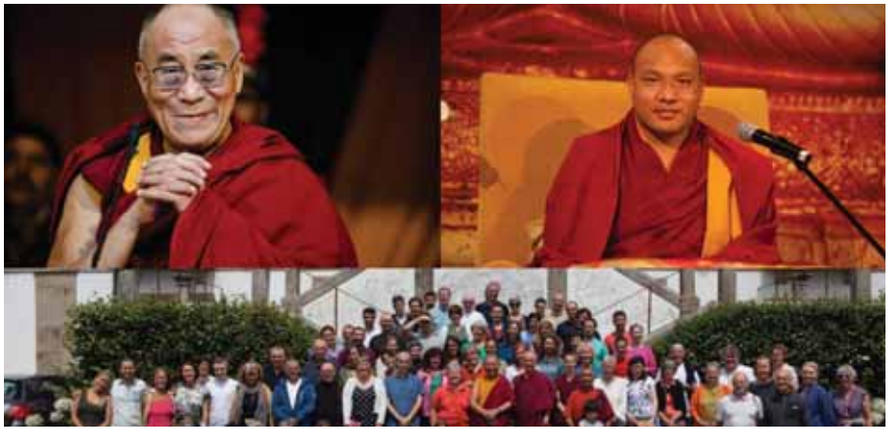
During the evening, healing will be represented by the talk given by Ringu Tulku Rinpoche on what meditation is and how its many benefits can be integrated into our modern day lives.

There will be a key note speech given by the secretary of Medway Interfaith Action Group (MIFA) John Caruana.

MIFA is a local charity that works to promote mutual respect and understanding between the diverse sets of faith groups in the Medway towns, by supporting and organising activities and events that serve this purpose.

On July 7, there will be a welcome drink and short introduction to Ringu Tulku Rinpoche and Bodhicharya Kent.

This will be followed by a public talk on how people can deal with their emotions from a Buddhist point of view.



CELEBRATIONS: Events will be held in the county to mark the day.

Milkshake live on the stage

NEW stage show Milkshake! Live Party Party will be at the Margate Winter Gardens on September 20 at 1pm.

Tickets are £12.50.

To book, call the box office on 01843 292795.

Stand-up show in town

COMEDIAN Richard Herring will be bringing his new solo stand-up show, Happy Now?, to the Folkestone Quarterhouse next year.

Mr Herring will be taking to the stage on April 16 at 8pm.

For tickets, call the box office on 01303 760750.

Child's book comes to life

A HEART-warming adaptation of Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler's new book The Scarecrow's Wedding will be at the Theatre Royal Margate on October 18 at 2pm.

Call 01843 292795 to book.

Custard pies and singing

MUSICAL Bugsy Malone will be performed at the Leas Cliff Hall from August 20 to 22.

The play is presented by Kidz on Stage and it will star more than 100 local drama school students.

For more information or to book tickets, visit www.atgtickets.com/folkestone.

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Melodic singer in Margate

FOLK inspired singer-songwriter Richard Navarro will be performing at the Theatre Royal, Margate, on November 4 at 7.30pm.

For tickets, visit www.theatreroyalmargate.com

Shakespeare play in park

THE Two Gentlemen of Verona will be performed at Whatman Park, Maidstone, on August 8 at 7.30pm.

Shakespeare's first play is a comedy about the adventures of two best friends – Valentine and Proteus.

Tickets are £19.50.

Enjoy hit songs of 60s

DREAMBOATS and Miniskirts will be at the Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury, from July 20 to 25.

Performances are at 2.30pm and 7.30pm .

To book, call the box office on 01227 787787.

Fame back in Maidstone

ICONIC musical Fame will be performed at the Hazlitt Theatre, Maidstone, next month.

It is set in New York City's High School for the Performing Arts and tells the story of a diverse group of students as they undertake four years of artistic work. To book. visit www.parkwood-theatres.co.uk

Bloodbath and tears of Breaking Bad on stage

By Molly Kersey
Molly.Kersey@archant.co.uk

A NEW stage show will be helping fans re-live the 'bloodbath and tears' of smash hit TV show Breaking Bad,

The show charts the rise and fall of mild-mannered chemistry teacher Walter White – who decides to turn an old RV into a meth lab after finding out that he has cancer, to help provide for his family financially.

He enlists the help of his former high school student Jesse, and as the series go on the trials and tribulations they experience get more and more severe.

American actor Miles Allen will take to the stage to perform his hilariously accurate renditions of characters in the show, One Man Breaking Bad – The Unauthorised Parody, including Walter White, Jesse, Saul, Hank and Mike.

Explaining his inspiration for the show, he said: "When the show ended, as I'm sure it was for many other people, I felt there was this huge hole in my heart.

"It was like 'what am I gonna watch now Breaking Bad, the greatest television show on earth, just ended?' I realised there was this huge love and desire to see the characters re-enacted through the YouTube video of mine that went viral in September 2013.

"It sort of developed from there, creating this one-man show that's like a nostalgia trip for all the fanboys and girls to enjoy."

So what can audiences expect from the show?

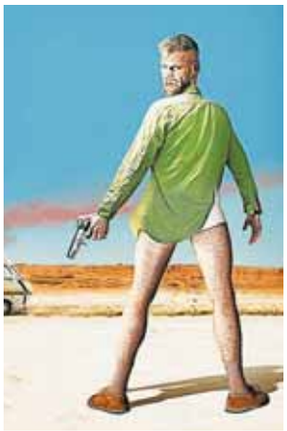
He said: "It's like a fusion of solo theatre and stand-up.

"It's a farcical love letter to all the people who went through the bloodbath and tears of Breaking Bad and who are wanting to kind of go on a nostalgia trip and laugh at all the different things that made it so special to them.

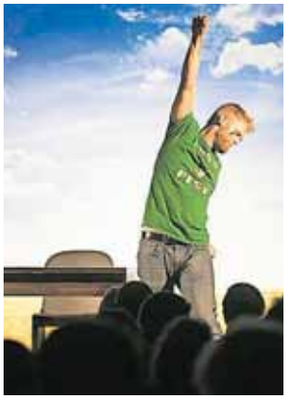
"It follows roughly the same timeline and the same plot points, condensed into a much shorter time frame."

The show will be at the Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells, on November 14 at 7.30pm.

For more information. visit www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk.



ACCURATE: He will perform renditions of Walter and Jesse.



INSPIRATION: Characters will be re-enacted in the stage show.

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Campaign to help children have an adventure

TV naturalist Steve Backshall is encouraging parents and their children to take part in outdoor fun

ALTHOUGH adventurer Steve Backshall has swum with great white sharks, caught a king cobra and been charged by elephants, his passion for the natural world extends much further than just the deadly.

The go-getting TV naturalist can barely contain his enthusiasm for the far less dangerous mini-beasts found in puddles and ponds, and the wonders of nature that surround us every day – and now he's on a mission to get families to share his passion.

The Deadly 60 presenter is fronting a new campaign to encourage children and parents to take part in mini-adventures outside, winning badges for small-scale outdoor fun including camping in the back garden, kissing a toad and jumping puddles.

"I'm trying to encourage families to spend more time outdoors with their kids," explains Mr Backshall.

"It'd be very easy for me to say you need to take all your kids on foot on safari round the Masai Mara – but not everyone has that available to them. Everyone does have the possibility of going to their local park with a torch and looking for moths, or giving a bush a big whack and catching all the bugs that drop out of it.

"These are things that can be of enormous joy and are potentially available to everyone."

After all, the presenter – who showed off his moves on last year's Strictly Come Dancing – points out: "I didn't start out when I was six years old by going free-diving with great white sharks – it took me 40 years to work up to that."

JOY: Steve Backshall is passionate about outdoor adventures

Backshall is fronting the Brave Bones Club initiative to encourage kids to embark on their own adventures this summer, and is currently filming a series of videos featuring activities children can try, including making a tent and a wildlife expedition. The films will be available through the Brave Bones Club website during the summer holidays.

"I have an infinite compendium of ideas that people can try with their youngsters, and my main drive is getting them to do things that are free or cheap and can be done locally, so they're available for everyone."

Although Backshall's had his fair share of risky encounters with deadly creatures and hostile landscapes, he's not encouraging families to do anything dangerous themselves – although he says children will learn from playing outdoors and getting bumped and bruised.

"It's essential that play is safe and there's the absolute minimum of risk involved," he said.

"But I do think it's a very important part of life to learn about constant risk assessments, to look around you and figure out what's genuinely dangerous and what's not."

For more information about the Brave Bones Club, set up by Cheestrings & Yollies, visit www.bravebonesclub.com

Del Boy is in Dartford

PECKHAM'S own Del Boy will be visiting the Orchard Theatre in Dartford on July 24.

He will be accompanied by Rodney and Uncle Albert as part of an interactive comedy dining experience hosted by Laughlines.

The entry price includes a three-course meal, which you eat while being entertained by live songs, music and interaction.

Call 01322 220000 to book.

Nutcracker on stage

THE Vienna Festival Ballet will bring one of the most famous classic ballets of all time, The Nutcracker, to Margate later this year.

Set to Tchaikovsky's score, the traditional tale of The Nutcracker tells the story of Clara and her enchanted nutcracker doll.

The production comes to the Margate Winter Gardens on November 17. To book, visit www.margatewintergardens.co.uk.

Striking Matches play

GUITAR duo Striking Matches are set to gig in Ashford on July 9.

The music of Sarah Zimmermann and Justin Davis occupies a spot at the intersection of country, rock and blues.

The performance is at St Mary's in Ashford on July 9.

Doors open at 7pm.

For tickets you can visit www.ticketea.co.uk/striking-matches-9th-july.

Outdoor Shakespeare

SHAKESPEARE'S Twelfth Night will be performed at an outdoor theatre at Emmetts Garden, near Sevenoaks, on August 20.

The much-loved romantic comedy will be performed from 7.30pm to 10pm and tickets are £15 for adults and £8 for children.

Booking is essential.

To purchase tickets you can call 0844 249 1895.

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SPORT: The swim school hope to encourage

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She learnt to swim through the school and the teaching methods helped her become a successful swimmer. She has a passion for swimming and wants to encourage others to share it with her and be a part of the sport.

You can contact the school by calling 07703 185837, or visit www.angelasswimschool.co.uk/locations/sevenoaks.

SUPERB: The course has the best facilities

The perfect place for getting into golf

LITTLESTONE Warren Golf Club welcomes visitors and members seven days a week. The Warren is a sister course to the famous Littlestone Championship links and is in superb condition. It is a great new course for new and experienced golfers and the practice facilities are some of the best in the area. A range of coaching packages are also available from the three PGAs, so if you are looking to get into golf it is a perfect place to start.

Gyms help you get fit and feel fantastic

GETTING ready for summer couldn't be easier at Folkestone Sports Centre.

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FITNESS: Aerobic classes are on offer

Pampering to look and feel amazing

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The Skinbreeze rejuvenation facial is the perfect facial for all skin types. Readers can experience this treatment dubbed the 'red carpet facial' for just £45 (normally £55).

BEAUTY: Facials are on offer this summer

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Summer care for all homes and gardens

Council offers garden recycling service and hopes residents will be signing up

RESIDENTS are encouraged to sign up to Ashford Borough Council's garden recycling service. The optional service runs until May 31, 2016 and residents will pay a pro-rata rate depending on when they sign up.

The current fee for new customers signing up in July will be £29.16 for a service starting in August. The fortnightly service allows you to recycle grass cuttings, hedge trimmings, prunings, leaves, dead plants and weeds in your brown wheeled bins - provided by the council.

Biffa collect the bins every fortnight except over Christmas and New Year, this also allows you to dispose of your dying Christmas tree without the trip to the tip.

This is the second year the council has offered the garden recycling service and they hope residents will be keen to sign up and support Ashford's recycling initiative.

To register, you can visit www.ashford.gov.uk/gardenrecycling.

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THIS unique independent shop specialising in the famous Portmeirion Group products has the largest selection of tableware, cookware, glass, and gifts in the South of England. Paul Smith established the business 12 years ago. The shop continues to hold its Centre of Excellence status, being the number one independent stockist in the region. All the products are genuine best first quality standard.

EXCELLENT: Cookware, glass and gifts

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Visit their retail showroom in Whitstable, which carries hundreds of fabric samples, wallpapers, poles and tracks, cushions, homeware and furniture – everything to inspire your new interior design scheme.

Their popular location and showroom in Whitstable has encouraged many new and existing clients to use their expertise from towns throughout Kent, London and South East England.

New jewels in Venice's regal crown

TRAVEL REVIEW: Venice

by Sarah Marshall

FAMOUS for being sticky, sweaty and – some might even cruelly claim – smelly during the height of summer, Venice is rarely relieved by a cool breeze. That probably explains why Isola delle Rose, a 16-hectare island south of San Marco, has always been known to Venetians as a jewel in the lagoon.

With temperatures teetering at a lethargy-inducing 31C, I welcome the salty Adriatic sea breeze billowing the muslin drapes on my rooftop daybed. Operating as a sanatorium in the 1920s, the island offered recuperation to patients with pulmonary diseases. The hospital has since been replaced with a hotel, although rest and recuperation are still high on the agenda.

Made from the sand and soil dug out during the construction of the city's commercial port, Isola delle Rose is one of 35 islands in the Venetian Lagoon.

While tourist hotspots such as Burano, famous for it's colourful fishermen's houses, and Murano, home to a world-renowned glass-blowing industry, are firmly on the map, other islands - once used to isolate plague victims or even as lunatic asylums - have been forgotten.

Hoteliers, though, are starting to realise a hitherto missed opportunity; in 2014 the Starwood group relaunched the five-star property on Isola di San Clemente and in March this year, Marriott opened their swish summer resort on Isola delle Rose.

Operating from March to October, the hotel consumes the peaceful green grounds where century-old olive groves – quite unheard of this far north – flourish, thanks to the unique microclimate.

PEACEFUL: The island offers green surroundings where century-old olive groves can flourish.

There are several seasonal hotels in Venice but this is a different concept; an escape from the summer madness that besets the city as cruise liners deposit hordes of tourists in the narrow, labyrinthine streets.

While lazing with a Bellini in the rooftop infinity pool, I enjoy a clear, crowd-free view of Venice, or La Serenissima to locals.

It took 350 workers four years to complete the 250-room hotel, restoring original 19th century buildings wherever possible. I stay in the main wing, with cool, neutral interiors, designed by Milan-based Matteo Thun.

Outside the main building, several grain stores have been converted into garden villas, with private pools and trellises of fragrant jasmine. A pre-Romanesque church, although not consecrated, is available for event use, and an industrial water tower looks all-too-tempting to climb.

I wander through the shady 19th century gardens, landscaped to an original design, listening to birdsong.

When the hospital closed in the 1970s, the island was abandoned for decades, and the overgrown linden forests became a favourite picnic spot for Venetians sneaking here in private boats. Today, they can still moor up alongside the hotel, although the food now on offer is of a much higher standard. Presided over by Michelin-starred chef Gianfranco Perbellini, the gourmet Dopolavoro restaurant is well worth the 20-minute boat ride from Venice, even if you're not staying at the hotel.

Once used as a social space by hospital workers – even the name, which means 'after work', is borrowed – the moody, mirror-filled restaurant is stirring up Venice's somewhat stale culinary scene with creative dishes such as zabaglione topped with caviar, and a pork belly so tender I almost mistake it for a tuna steak.

There are three other restaurants to dine in: breakfast bar Cucina; relaxed Sagra, serving a rotating menu of regional cuisine; and al fresco grill, Giardino.

While Isola delle Rose's trump card is its separation from Venice, it's also the hotel's main drawback. A regular 20-minute shuttle service runs to San Marco until 1am, but the 9am start is a little too late to avoid heaving crowds.

But while Venice first-timers might prefer to be in the thick of the action, returning visitors will relish a chance to weave beyond bricole poles and delve further into the salt marshes, discovering new jewels in the regal city's crown.

TRAVEL FACTS

SARAH Marshall was a guest of the JW Marriott Venice (www.jwmarriottvenice.com) ROOMS at the hotel cost from 395 euros per night, with the price including breakfast.

Monarch Airlines fly to Venice Marco Polo from Birmingham, London and Manchester from £66 return.

Film Reviews by Damon Smith

AMY
(15, 127 mins) Documentary

WITH her distinctive beehive hairdo, thick eyeliner and deep, soulful vocal delivery, Amy Winehouse became an icon for a musical generation. Her debut album Frank left critics and music fans in a daze but it was her follow-up, Back To Black, that rewrote the record books, earning Winehouse five Grammy awards including record of the year and song of the year, plus three Ivor Novello awards for her songwriting and a BRIT award as Best British Female. At the height of this fame and success, Winehouse died from alcohol poisoning, aged 27. Asif Kapadia's controversial documentary charts the life and times of the distinctive singer-songwriter, incorporating contributions from her friends and family, plus some of the people who worked with her and were touched by her fragility and genius.

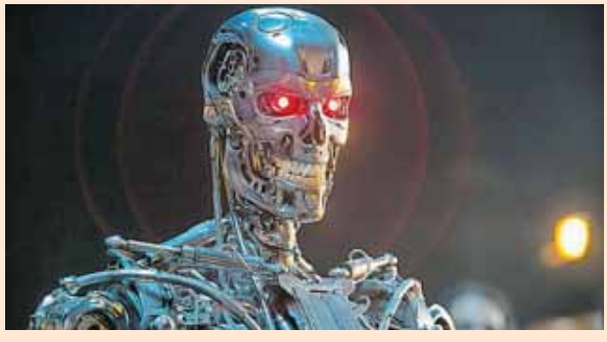
The film details Winehouse's well-publicised battles with drug and alcohol addiction as well as her mental health issues, and pieces together events leading up to her death, posing difficult questions about the culpability of the media and some of her inner circle in her tragic downfall.

TERMINATOR GENISYS
(12A, 126 mins) Sci-fi/thriller

ARNOLD Schwarzenegger is true to his word and returns as the mechanised killing machine in this reboot of the Terminator franchise, directed by Alan Taylor, which promises to tell the same origin story from a fresh perspective.

Released in 1984, James Cameron's groundbreaking sci-fi thriller The Terminator tapped into concerns about nuclear warfare to explore a dystopian future in which machines have rebelled against mankind and rendered our species almost obsolete.

Terminator Genisys follows a similarly bleak narrative trajectory. In the aftermath of judgment day, when machines rebelled against their human creators, the last vestiges of mankind face complete extinction at the hands of the automata.



Rebel leader John Connor hopes to give humanity a fighting chance by sending his friend Kyle Reese back in time to 1986 to protect his helpless mother Sarah from a shape-shifting Terminator.

COMET
(15, 89 mins)

WRITER-director Sam Esmail's ambitious debut feature unfolds over six years and charts the ups and downs of a young couple's love life in chronologically disjointed fragments. Dell is almost run over by a car until a pretty stranger called Kimberly intervenes. Dell resolves to win her heart from under boorish boyfriend Josh's nose.

By Hannah Stephenson
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

DETERRENT: Fellow gardeners have offered tips on how to keep neighbourhood moggies at bay.

Protect garden from local cats

NOW I don't want to be a killjoy about people's pets, but when I see a neighbour's feline stray into my garden, I just want to get my claws out.

I've caught them rolling around in my glorious borders of purple nepeta, otherwise known as catmint – red rag to a bull, I hear you say, but when I planted it years ago, I had no idea it would be such a moggie magnet – using my trees and shrubs as scratching posts and using a variety of areas of the garden to do their business.

I don't particularly want to dig my catmint up, but it might be prudent to replant it in a different place so local cats will disregard other areas of my garden.

To date, the best deterrent I've found was a high-powered water pistol bought from a car boot sale for 50p which I left at the patio door and fired maniacally every time a cat dared to cross my garden path. But here are some other suggestions I've collected over the years...

One fellow gardener reckons that the only way to stop neighbours' cats wandering in is to have your own cat, preferably a tom, as this generally keeps other animals out of your garden. Alternatively, try to stop them getting in. Block your boundary gaps with prickly plants or prunings such as holly. Fit wire or string 10-15cm above the top of fences to make it difficult for cats to balance on them.

Another solution is an old gamekeeper's trick. Place half-full plastic bottles in borders, as the light reflection off the bottle is supposed to deter animals. Again, mailshot and other unwanted CDs can provide a shining light deterrent when threaded on twine with knots in between to keep them apart. String these across flower beds or hang from trees and the light reflection should deter cats, but maybe not forever.

Don't leave exposed soil in borders. Instead, mulch with stone chipping or pebbles, or keep the soil well mulched with a moisture-retaining material such as manure, as wet ground is not particularly attractive to them. Also, invest in a good selection of ground cover plants to deter cats from venturing into your border.

Cover ponds with netting to stop cats diminishing your fish supplies and position bird feeds in a clear area of the garden where they will be inaccessible to cats.

Try fitting a squirrel baffle – downward opening cone or biscuit tin – to the posts of bird tables to stop cats climbing up them.

If cats in your garden are scratching up seedbeds, try putting a galvanised chicken-wire cage over the area and keep it in position until the plants are of a reasonable size.

Whatever method you choose, clear away any evidence of fouling first, as this acts as a magnet for more cats and more fouling.

And if all else fails, buy yourself a high-powered water pistol to keep by the back door....

feedback

your say...

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Please include your name and address, although these will be withheld in exceptional circumstances, and a daytime phone number for verification (this will not be published). We reserve the right to edit all letters.

Never upset an Austen fanatic

I WAS disappointed in the review of Terry Townsend's book Jane Austen's Kent (KoS, last week) didn't mention the most important affiliation that Jane Austen had with Kent.

In a BBC Omnibus biographical programme on the author, in co-operation with the Jane Austen Society, none of the facts of Jane Austen's association with Kent were mentioned as recorded by Terry Townsend, save one, that being Jane frequently visited her brother Edward at his manor house in Godmersham Park.

It had been bequeathed to him by Thomas Knight who adopted Edward.

Considerable footage in the programme was given to the fact that Jane's brother married the daughter of Lady Bridges who lived in a manor at Goodnestone, a village between Canterbury and Deal.

The house is still there, where it was pointed out Jane enjoyed going to balls.

On the Bridges estate was a house by the name of Rawlings where Jane's brother and his wife, Elizabeth lived.

When Jane stayed there the most salient part of her life came about. It was at Rawlings that she first began to write, where she conceived and realised the characters in Pride and Prejudice, Sense and Sensibility, and Northanger Abbey. There can be no greater affiliation with Jane Austen and Kent than that.

Michael Wise,
Canterbury

EU is not cause of Europe peace

CONTRARY to assertions by Anthony Hook, it is not the EU which preserves the peace in Europe.

From 1945 until the end of the Cold War, the mainly American, British and Canadian troops of NATO whose stand-off with the Warsaw Pact prevented conflict.

Since 1991, however, the growing power of the bureaucrats in Brussels, enforcing such divisive projects as the single currency, has greatly increased tensions and will eventually lead to internal disruption.

It is the undemocratic nature of the EU, run for the benefit of the political class, not the people, which is the greatest threat to peace in Europe.

Colin Bullen,
Tonbridge

LETTER OF THE WEEK

Time for politicians to finally solve Stack

THERE are few problems which have caused as much carnage for our beautiful county as Operation Stack.

While I support the French strikers, who are simply trying to save their jobs, it is an absolute nightmare for motorists in the county.

Not only that, but this week I read that according to the CEO at the Port of Dover, it costs the UK £250 million for every day that traffic is at a stop.

What makes things worse, is the fact that it becomes groundhog day every time these wildcat strikes take place in Calais.

The politicians convene emergency committees, police are deployed to assist the stricken drivers and everyone groans (including our Police and Crime Commissioner apparently) as the county grinds to a halt.

It's the same as it always is. We all know the routine at this point.

And in the aftermath, we get the same MPs trotting out to talk about meetings with transport ministers, and if we're lucky the PM may say that 'things must change'.

But they don't. In fact, absolutely nothing changes, and we witness the same ringing of hands, and navel gazing as yet another Operation Stack ruins the lives of those who drive in Kent.

For a problem which we have relatively regularly, it is an absolute disgrace that still nothing has been done by all of these gutless politicians.

It's just the same old broken promises, which, in the case of Operation Stack have been going on for around three decades now.

When will enough become enough? When will the politicians pull their finger out and get Kent moving for the people who matter; their electorate!

Timothy Jones,
Tunbridge Wells

Is this really the last word...?

IN reply to Mary McNulty (KoS, letters, ad nauseum); and to draw a line under the issues; I firstly suggest she re-reads what I've actually said.

Whilst I am clearly an atheist, I've not been as strident as such as Prof Richard Dawkins, being more in tune with the late Bertrand Russell who pointed out that, broadly, religion is: "the (understandable)ignorance of Bronze Age men".

On other religions, there has simply been no need to comment though I have done so elsewhere when necessary.

As for Christianity not being "forceful", such would come as a surprise to victims of, for example: Charlemagne, The Crusades, witch-finders, the Inquisition, 18th century slavery, and Galileo; merely for looking through an early telescope!

That said, of course, Christians also inspired such as the 17th century Levellers, the ending of European slavery, and led many of the 19th and 20th century social progressive movements and charities amongst others.

I leave her though with the news, I'm told, that at the recent London gay Pride there were the usual tiny bunch of bigoted, to be specific, Christians.

But they were as usual ignored by the several hundred thousand revellers who included gay Buddhists, some very brave gay Muslims, and quite a few gay Christians of numerous denominations.

Well done to all, and those in particular.

Ray Duff,
Folkestone

...ah, probably not it seems

JUST returned from a visit to Auschwitz, I see Saint Duff still thinks he belongs to an oppressed minority, despite having the 'free will' granted to the rest of us.

To try and win his argument he puts words in my mouth I didn't say and continues the same sneering nonsense with absolutely no point and to reach the same conclusion.

I really don't understand his problem, he's like Don Quixote, 'tilting at windmills'.

The problem he has with the Christian religion has nearly been solved by the religions themselves adopting pagan Babylonian rites and their own interpretation of God's laws.

The climate change that so concerns him has been happening for millennia, look at the Buache map, look at the appalling weather in the 1700s etc.

But then St Duff wants the world to change to suit him and imagines we should all follow meekly behind.

The Israelites prospered when they followed God and there's no doubt if we also followed the wisdom of the Creator who made us and knows what's best for us, this world would be a much better place.

It's people who think they know better, or have their own selfish agenda that are destroying the world - as I saw in Auschwitz.

Phil Granger,
West Malling

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

The way KoS will create our unique and compelling content is to follow these 10 principles:

Kent on Sunday will:

1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
3) Be written in clear, concise English.
4) Not be overly sensational.
5) Have a sense of humour.
6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
8) Highlight topical issues of concern to people living in the county.
9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.
10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.

images of kent

Whitstable Castle

by **Jean Sheridan from Cuxton**

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Grand Burstin Hotel, Folkestone

July-August, 2015 • 3 or 4 nights half board, from £**109**pp • Quote: GB-KOS

The Grand Burstin Hotel is set in a prime position overlooking Folkestone Harbour. It is renowned as one of the UK's top entertainment hotels, so you can relax, dine in style and be entertained all under one roof. Cabaret shows are performed every evening - fantastic entertainment for all ages! The Spindles Health Club has an indoor heated Swimming pool, sauna and a state of the art gym (£4 per session payable on site).

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3 August	£139pp
10 August	£139pp
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Bosworth Hall Hotel, Leicestershire

July - August, 2015 • 4 nights half board, £**139**pp • Quote: BS-KOS

Enjoy a great value, relaxing summer break at Bosworth Hall Hotel, set in 11 acres of landscaped gardens in the village of Market Bosworth near Leicester. The hotel has a leisure club with an indoor pool, gym, tennis courts, bike hire and more - extra charge applies. There's plenty to see and do within a short drive of Market Bosworth; Twycross Zoo, West Midlands Safari Park and Drayton Manor Park are close by.

INCLUDED: 4 nights stay at Bosworth Hall Hotel sharing a twin/double bedded room with en-suite facilities • 4 dinners and 4 breakfasts

Best of the 60s & 70s Christmas Party

27 November, 2015 • 3 nights half board-plus, from £**239**pp • Quote: XN11-KOS

Great Entertainment, Free Drinks, and a super location make Warner's Norton Grange resort, at Yarmouth on the Isle of Wight, our most popular Christmas Party venue. This Christmas we're featuring music from the 60s and 70s including Edison Lighthouse *(Love Grows where my Rosemary goes)* plus tributes to Dusty Springfield and Tom Jones and lots of festive and nostalgic fun. There's also a Free Bar from 6pm to midnight every night.

INCLUDED: Free drinks from 6pm to midnight every night - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & pumped mixers • 3 dinners and 3 breakfasts • Live nightly entertainment • 3 nights en-suite chalet - upgrades available • Return car ferry

Christmas Cracker Party through the Decades

20 November, 2015 • 3 nights half board-plus, £**129**pp • Quote: CC11-KOS

Join us for an over 40s Christmas party weekend to remember as we re-wind the decades and go back to the 60s, 70s and 80s at Pontins Pakefield, by the sea near Lowestoft, Suffolk. Enjoy live music from original 70s band Brotherhood of Man, 60s rockers The Swinging Blue Jeans and the new touring show Whitney – Queen of The Night. Add 3 Free Drinks per person per night and you've got the perfect recipe for a great party weekend.

INCLUDED: 3 Free drinks every night - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers • 3 breakfasts & 3 dinners • Full entertainment programme • 3 nights en-suite chalet - upgrade available • Towels & linen

Carry on New Year Party at Bosworth Hall

29 January, 2016 • 2 nights half board-plus, £**119**pp • Quote: BW1-KOS

Extend your New Year celebrations at Bosworth Hall Hotel, in the village of Market Bosworth near Leicester. Our popular private party weekends have become a must-do annual event with guests returning year after year. We've arranged a super entertainment line-up for our Party Break, including tributes to Frankie Valli, The Eagles and Kenny & Dolly. You will also enjoy 2-for-1 drinks both nights.

INCLUDED: 2-for-1 drinks from 7pm to 11pm both nights • 2 nights sharing an en-suite bedroom with TV & tea/coffee tray • 2 dinners & 2 breakfasts • Full programme of live entertainment both nights • Free use of leisure facilities (indoor pool & gym)

We Love the 60s Spring Party Weekend

11 March, 2016 • 3 nights half board-plus, £**129**pp • Quote: PS3-KOS

Join us at Pontins Pakefield, on the Suffolk coast, for a Spring Party - for over 40s only - to blow away the winter cobwebs. We've lined up a brilliant entertainment showbill featuring The Ivy League, The Merseybeats and The Pacemakers plus tributes to The Beach Boys and The Beatles. With non-stop entertainment from Friday evening to Sunday evening and free drinks every night, this is one party weekend you're sure to love.

INCLUDED: 3 Free drinks per person per night - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers • Full 60s theme entertainment programme • 3 breakfasts & 3 dinners • 3 nights en-suite chalet accommodation - upgrade available

Back to the 60s Carry on New Year Party

8 January, 2016 • 3 nights half board-plus, from £**229**pp • Quote: BP1-2-KOS

Too busy to do the New Year in December? Join us for a private party at Warner Bembridge Coast Hotel on the Isle of Wight as we extend the New Year festivities into January and take you on a trip down memory lane back to the 1960s. Our exclusive weekend, designed specially for the over 40s generation, includes a gala New Year's Eve party, complete with Big Ben countdown to midnight and a Best of British sing- a-long with all the old favourites including Land of Hope and Glory and Auld Lang Syne. PLUS there are Free Drinks every night from 6pm-midnight to help the party go with a swing. The entertainment line-up features authentic 60s Bands The Fourmost and Union Gap, plus a tribute to Dusty Springfield with Maxine Mazumder.

INCLUDED: Free drinks from 6pm to midnight every night - beers - house lager, bitter and cider; branded spirits including Smirnoff, Bacardi, Bells, Gordon's Gin, Courvoisier, Lambs Navy Rum, Martini & Harveys Bristol Cream Sherry; wine by the glass; draught soft drinks and cordials • 3 dinners and 3 breakfasts • 1960s themed live nightly entertainment • 3 nights en-suite chalet - upgrades to main hotel available • Return car ferry crossing Portsmouth-Fishbourne or Lymington-Yarmouth

Optional Come Dancing Party Package

Just £**50**pp extra • Quote: BP1-3-KOS

Fans of Strictly Come Dancing and dance enthusiasts can add dance tuition, dance cabaret, social dancing, a Gala Ball and much more to this special weekend at Bembridge. Richard Still and Morgan Hemphill, 6 Times UK Ten Dance Champions, will demonstrate for us on the Friday and Saturday evenings and provide a mini Latin workshop on Saturday afternoon. There are reserved tables and seating exclusively for a maximum of 200 dance guests. Tuition - up to 8 hours - is by Philip Wylie of Ballroom & Latin Dance specialists **Holiday & Dance**.

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driving

By Steve Loader
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

Kadjar follows up Captur success

PREVIEW: Renault has learned from the styling disaster of the 2008-vintage Koleos – the new Kadjar looks classy, desirable and well-priced...

HAVING shunned the SUV market phenomenon for a while, Renault embraced it with the ill-fated Koleos in 2008.

Its plus point was underpinnings from sister brand Nissan's popular X-Trail, endowing 4x4 versions with decent off-road ability, but the boxy body lacked the flair expected from the self-styled 'Createur d'Automobiles' and the Koleos was axed after just two years on sale here.

Five years on, and buoyed by the success of its striking Captur crossover, Renault is having another crack at the midsize crossover/SUV segment with the new Kadjar (from £17,995).

This time, it's a looker; order books are open and deliveries start in September.

It is available in either front-wheel drive or 4x4, with a choice of two diesels or one turbo-charged petrol unit.

Spec levels are generous, with standard kit including cruise control, speed limiter, Hill Start Assist, six airbags, and seat belts with load limiters and pre-tensioners in the front.

Comfort levels at the top end of the range look lavish indeed and this is one sector of the market where premium brands don't have it all their own way – witness the success of the Nissan Qashqai.

And while Kadjar trim levels will be familiar to Renault fans, there is a significant amount of customisation available through add-on spec packs or individual features such as side running boards, wheel arch extensions, a retractable tow bar which can be released from within the boot, and illuminated lower body side mouldings.

Choosing an engine may be tough though: the 1.2-litre turbocharged TCe 130bhp petrol unit is lively (0-62mph in 10.1 seconds) and highly efficient (50.4 mpg combined cycle) and saves nearly £2,000 against the cheapest diesel, the 110bhp 1.5-litre (from £19,895), while the flagship 130bhp 1.6-litre diesel starts at £22,795, and is the only powertrain offered with 4x4 (from £24,295).

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Leon Cupra – SEAT's hot hatch star car

Leon Cupra dynasty just gets better and better and it's time hot hatch buyers realised what a bargain it is, writes **Steve Loader...**

SEAT Leon SC Cupra 280

Price:	from £27,210
Driving appeal:	★★★★★
Image:	★★★★★
Space:	★★★★
Value:	★★★★★
Running costs:	★★★
How green?:	★★★
Best rival:	Ford Focus ST

SEAT has consistently produced one of the best hot hatchbacks – the Leon Cupra.

But, sadly, it is also consistently under-rated by would-be buyers. Many opt instead for the ubiquity of the Ford Focus or Vauxhall Astra GTC equivalents, others are seduced by the Renault Megane Renaultsport's brashness, and a lot try to hide their need for speed inside the relatively sober-suited and more expensive VW Golf GTI.

The last choice is perhaps hardest to understand, as SEAT is the Spanish arm of the VW group and underpinning each Leon generation has been the equivalent Golf.

Now into its third generation – launched last year – the Cupra should be harder than ever to ignore.

Firstly, it is attractively-priced, with the lower output 265PS (261bhp) version of its 2.0-litre petrol engine available from £26,660, though only in three-door SC format; the bigger 280PS (276bhp) version is also sold in five-door hatch (from £28,210) and sharp-suited ST estate (from £29,205) variants.

Secondly, while all rivals have styling weaknesses – too brash, too staid, or even too ugly – the Cupra looks just right in any of its three formats.

Thirdly, while it can snarl when kicked by the right foot, it's also refined and well-mannered on the road for a hot hatch and, driven sensibly – you hope – is capable of 42.8mpg on the combined cycle.

But the big thing for hot hatch buyers is bragging rights, as suggested by the fact that Cupra stands for Cup Racing, and this starts with knowing the 280 version is the most powerful production model SEAT has ever made. You could follow that up with its 0-62mph in 5.9 seconds for the 280 manual, but that's not the real appeal for me.

It's more about how the Leon delivers all this power; there's some thunder, but I enjoyed the fluid and effortless way the car responds to the driver with taut steering, crisp gear changes and lots of grip.

And while our test car was a 280PS, the figures suggest the 265PS won't disappoint either and you'll definitely save yourself £1,250.

As with the whole Leon range, the interior has been a big talking point: the previous generation car was too idiosyncratic and barren for my taste and a total contrast to the exotic exterior styling, while the current car is less of a shock inside and out.

But some might argue that the latest cabin is a bit bland and the VW Group parts bin much in evidence, but it looks smart and durable and everything falls nicely to hand.

Furthermore, the Leon interior is roomy and well-thought out even if the middle rear seat passenger has to cope with a chunky tunnel between his/her feet.

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Official Government Test Environmental Data. Fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO_2 emissions (g/km). Viva range: Urban: 50.4 (5.6) – 52.3 (5.4), Extra-urban: 72.4 (3.9) – 76.3 (3.7), Combined: 62.8 (4.5) – 65.7 (4.3). CO_2 emissions: 104 – 99g/km.#

*Model shown VIVA SE 1.0i (75PS) £7,995 with optional metallic paint £545. Total OTR cost £8,540. Offers available on orders or registrations between 19 June and 7 October 2015. #Official EU-regulated test data are provided for comparison purposes and actual performance will depend on driving style, road conditions and other non-technical factors. Offer applies to pre model year 2016 vehicles only. See Retailer for further details. Prices and specifications correct at time of going to press.

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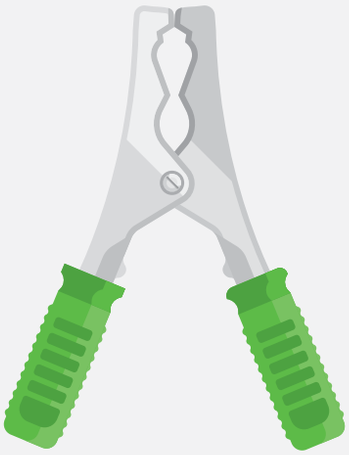

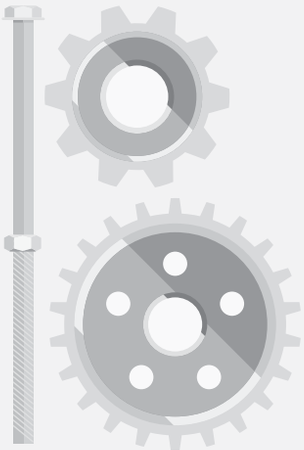

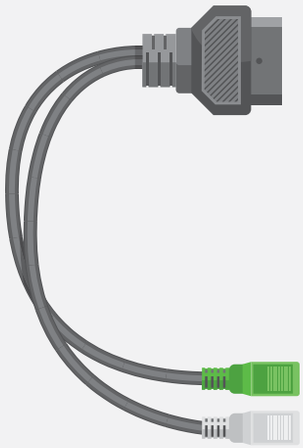

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Swale Academies Trust

Westlands School

Westlands Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 1PF

Site Maintenance Technician/Caretaker

Required as soon as possible

£14,671 - £16,633 - 37 hours a week

The successful applicant will work as a member of the Site Maintenance team to provide a comprehensive, well organised and effective caretaking service to this large secondary school. The post is line-managed by the Site Manager. As well as general caretaking duties, they will be expected to undertake site maintenance. A working knowledge and experience of carpentry, electrics, plumbing and decorating would be desirable. The ability to drive a minibus, or a willingness to undertake training, would be beneficial.

Applicants should be flexible over start and finish times.

Shifts will be between the hours of 5.30 a.m. and 7.30 p.m. and may alternate fortnightly.

Extra payments will be made to cover any out-of-hours lettings during evenings and weekends and for weekend/Bank Holiday standby duty, all of which are carried out on a mandatory, shared rota basis.

Recruitment packs with full details are available from Westlands School or online; (www.westlands.org.uk).

An application form and covering letter detailing how you meet the person specification should be provided.

Please note, we cannot accept CVs alone. No agencies

Closing date: Wednesday 15 July 2015, interviews w/c 20 July

Swale Academies Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This post is subject to an enhanced CRB check

Contact Details

Tel: 01795 477475 - Fax: 01795 479461 - Email swa@westlands.kent.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mr S Cox MA
Trust Principal: Mr J Whitcombe MA

Maths & Computing · Science

Swale Academies Trust Company No 7344732
Registered Office: Ashdown House, Johnson Road, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 1JS

Be part of our successful team

Field Sales Account Manager

Our very successful Kent Life magazine has a rare opportunity for an Account Manager to join them. Kent Life is a glossy lifestyle magazine that celebrates all that is great about life in this wonderful county. At the heart of the magazine are features on villages, towns and cities, society occasions and food & drink events, hotels and restaurants, as well as theatre, drama, ballet, music, festivals and family entertainment.

This opportunity will see you selling print and digital advertising campaigns and solutions to local businesses. As well as managing existing customers and seeing that they continuously gain return on their investment, you will also work with new clients, inspiring them with genuine cost-effective ideas and solutions tailor-made for their business.

The ideal candidate will be from a media background and have knowledge of magazine and/or digital advertising. However we will also consider applications from candidates with a strong B2B field sales background who know the mid-Kent area, can build rapport well and have a consultative sales approach.

With our excellent product training and our continuous development programme, we'll show you how to develop first class solutions for our customers, cultivate excellent business relationships and present effective and innovative ideas that will provide real value and response for our customers.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE WILL HAVE:

- A passion for publishing and lifestyle magazines
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- The ability to produce and action effective ideas and promotions
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- The ability to secure new business and manage existing accounts
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Bradstow School

Bradstow is a creative and unique residential school for children between the ages of 5 & 19. It is situated in 13 acres of parkland just a few hundred metres from the sandy beaches of Broadstairs. We seek to meet the needs of children and young people with autism and severe learning difficulties with associated behaviours that may be challenging. We have achieved national recognition for our developments in Communication and Behaviour Management.

HOUSEKEEPING SUPPORT CO-ORDINATOR

To ensure the delivery of an effective and efficient catering, cleaning and laundry provision to the school. This includes managing the operational day to day functions of the Catering & Housekeeping Support Staff and cooking of nutritional and healthy meals.

£20,147 - £23,308 - 37 hours per week, 9.00 am - 5.00 pm to be worked 4 days Mon - Fri, plus Sat - Term time only, plus 2 weeks*

COOK

To provide healthy meals for pupils and staff

£10,646 - £11,545 - 28 hours per week, Mon 10.00 am - 5.30 pm, Tue, Wed, Thur 12.30 pm - 5.30 pm, Sun 8.00 am - 2.00 - Term time only, plus 2 weeks*

DOMESTIC ASSISTANT

To undertake general cleaning duties and maintain an acceptable standard of cleanliness and hygiene at Bradstow

£4,742 - £4,841 per annum - 15 hours per week, 4.00 pm - 7.00 pm Mon-Fri, - Term time only, plus two weeks*

The closing date for all Housekeeping Team applications is midnight Thursday 9th July 2015

HOUSEPARENT - EXTENDED PROVISION

Working as part of the childcare team, this role involves providing care and support to students mornings, evenings and weekends being a student's Keyworker and some management responsibility.

£22,442 - £25,416 pa - 41 hours per week. All year round

FEMALE WAKING NIGHT ATTENDANT - EXTENDED PROVISION

To be responsible for the supervision and care of the children and young people at night.

£23,459 - £26,144 (inc - night allowance) - 36¾ hours per week, (nights inc weekends). All Year Round

Due to the nature of the personal care being provided, Section 7 (2) (a) of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 applies

FLEXIBANK TEAM SUPPORT WORKERS

To provide additional support a cover within either the classrooms or residences.

Flexi-bank - £7.43 per hour - When required (up to 41 hours per week including split shifts and weekends)

The closing date for all Residential Care Team applications is midnight Thursday 27th August 2015, and interviews will not be held until September 2015.

***For these roles there will also be up to a maximum of two weeks for the school's respite care provision if required, for which extra payment would be paid.**

For all posts we look for candidates who are mature, warm, creative and open to learning with a patient and caring attitude to deal sensitively with vulnerable children.

We are committed to sustainability and preserving the environment and therefore encourage applications by email, so for an application form and information pack please email **personnel@bradstow.wandsworth.sch.uk**. Or you may call **01843 608727** (24 hour recruitment answer machine).

Please note that CV's will not be considered.

Cumbria House Care Home

requires

Night Carer

for Friday and Saturday nights

Must have experience and the relevant QCF in Health and Social Care

Post is subject to enahanced DBS check

If interested, please contact

Julia or Emily on 01303 254019

WANTED:

PART TIME DRIVERS

based in Gravesend vicinity, for VIP national car deliveries. Must be smart/articulate/ reliable with 12 years driving experience & good knowledge of UK roads. Clean licence preferred. No tradeplates.

Email cv to: claireh@maq1.com

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Northfleet School for Girls

We have the following opportunities from September 2016:

PART TIME TECHNOLOGY TECHNICIAN

16 hours over 3 days each week term time only
Kent Range 4 - £5,900 to £6,2306 pa

Responsibilities will include the preparation of items and equipment for a wide range of technology lessons from use of laser cutters to technology saws, drills and associated equipment. Directly supporting students in their lesson projects under the direction of our specialist teaching staff and responsibility for the Health & Safety and maintenance routines of the area are key to the role.

Whilst experience in the technology area and an understanding of equipment is key to this role, your ability to support, innovate and inspire challenge in the subject will be valuable to the job.

Applicants should have a relevant qualification or commercial experience in this or a similar subject.

LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANTS for STUDENTS WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS

31.25 hours per week term time only
Kent Range 4 £11,616 to £12,204 pa
and 20 hours per week (over 5 days)
Kent Range 4 £ £7,434 to £ 7,810 pa

Responsibilities will include supporting the physical and learning needs of a named student in accessing all aspects of the curriculum and school life, including personal hygiene needs on occasions. The successful applicant will work under the guidance of our Inclusion Manager and be part of a team of support for students requiring specific needs and adaptations to allow full engagement with education.

A further opportunity exists for 20 hours per week supporting the needs of identified individuals, including Pupil Premium students and other groups who need support to overcome barriers in learning both inside and outside the school.

Northfleet School for Girls is committed to offering a full and varied curriculum balanced with a care and determination to ensure students not only succeed but enjoy their time at our school.

Kent County Council and all its personnel are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

For further information, to arrange a visit and to apply please contact

Mrs Jo Annable HR Assistant at Northfleet School for Girls, Hall Road, Northfleet, Kent

Tel: 01474 831020

Email: personnel@northfleetgirls.kent.sch.uk

Closing date: 9 am, 13 July 2015

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LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

LICENSING ACT 2003: Application for Premises Licence

Notice is hereby given that Caroline Charlotte HILL of The Black Horse, 11 and 12 Orchard Street, Canterbury, Kent CT2 8AP has applied to Canterbury City Council for the GRANT of a Premises Licence for The sale of alcohol (on sales) to patrons of the hotel only, 24hours, every day. The above for the premises The Black Horse, 11 and 12 Orchard Street, Canterbury, Kent CT2 8AP.

A register of licensing applications can be inspected at www.canterbury.gov.uk/licensing or at Council Offices, Military Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1YW tel. 01227 862000 by appointment with the Licensing Team between 10am and 4pm Monday to Friday.

Any person wishing to submit representations to our application must give notice in writing to the address shown above, giving in detail the grounds of objection by 30/07/2015.

The Council will not entertain representations where the writer requests that his identity remains anonymous. Copies of all representations will be included in the papers presented to the Licensing Panel and will therefore pass into the public domain. Representations must relate to one of the four Licensing Objectives: the prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, the prevention of public nuisance and the protection of children from harm.

LICENSING ACT 2003: Application for Premises Licence

Notice is hereby given that Rajendran Ravichandran of 18 St Dunstan's Street, Canterbury CT2 8AF has applied to Canterbury City Council for the VARIATION of

To permit the provision of late night refreshment daily from 23.00 hrs to 05.00 instead of 23.00 to 24.00 and to change the hours for the sale of alcohol to 00.00 to 24.00 every day instead of 06.00 to 24.00 every day for the premises Canterbury Wine Mart situated at 18 St Dunstan's Street, Canterbury.

A register of licensing applications can be inspected at http://www.canterbury.gov.uk/licensing or at Council Offices, Military Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1YW tel. 01227 862000 by appointment with the Licensing Team between 10am and 4pm Monday to Friday.

Any person wishing to submit representations to my/our application must give notice in writing to the address shown above, giving in detail the grounds of objection by 27/07/2015.

The Council will not entertain representations where the writer requests that his identity remains anonymous. Copies of all representations will be included in the papers presented to the Licensing Panel and will therefore pass into the public domain. Representations must relate to one of the four Licensing Objectives: the prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, the prevention of public nuisance and the protection of children from harm. In the case of an application for a provisional statement, please note that representations will be restricted once a statement has been issued.

CHARITIES ACT 2011
Longfield Mission Room, Longfield Hill, DA3 7AH

The Managing and Custodian Trustees give notice of their intention to sell the freehold of the above property. Any representations concerning this sale should be directed to Ibbett Mosely Chartered Surveyors (ref. ROLW), 125 High Street, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1UT within 30 days of this notice.

PLEASE MENTION THIS PAPER WHEN REPLYING TO THESE ADVERTISEMENTS

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

Manroy Engineering Ltd of Unit 1 Power Works Industrial Estate, Slade Green Road, Erith, Kent, DA8 2HU is applying to change an existing licence as follows:

To add an Operating Centre to keep 3 vehicles and 0 trailers at Unit 1 Power Works Industrial Estate, Slade Green Road, Erith, Kent, DA8 2HU.

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF stating their reasons, within 21days of this notice.

Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A guide to making representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

Paul Wills trading as P. Wills Transport Limited of Touchwood, Kings Road, Minster, Sheerness, Kent ME12 2HL is applying to change an existing licence as follows: To keep an extra 3 goods vehicles and 0 trailers at the operating centre at Brett Concrete Limited, St. Michaels Close, Aylesford, Maidstone, Kent ME20 7XE.

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

Aussies prove big draw with crowds

Cricket the big winner as tourists romp to 255 run victory...

INSPIRATION: Jamie Clifford hopes youngsters from the county will have been inspired by the recent Australian game

Cricket

By Jamie Weir
jamie.weir@archant.co.uk

AUSTRALIA may well have beaten Kent County Cricket Club by a comprehensive 255 runs when the two teams clashed, but Kent's chief executive Jamie Clifford reckons the real winner is the sport.

The tourists won the four-day friendly with ease in the opening match of their Ashes warm up, but the club still drew some significant benefits; not least the boost to the sport's profile.

One of Clifford's strategies to get the club into the top flight has been nurturing homegrown players through the club's academy system, and into the professional team.

It seemed to be working during Kent's last innings against Australia, with rising star, Daniel Bell-Drummond taking Australia's bowlers to task, eventually making a total of 127 from 112 balls.

The hope, says Clifford, is that the visit from the Aussies will fire up the cricket stars of tomorrow, inspiring them to one day play for their county, or indeed England.

With around 16,000 fans in attendance over the four days, that looks likely.

He said: "The boost the last couple of weeks have given cricket has been very important to the club and the game.

"During the Australia game, we had lots of children coming along to watch and draw inspiration to get out and start playing themselves.

"The Ashes series through the summer should keep that momentum up."

It isn't just the men's game Clifford is passionate about; Kent partnered with Canterbury Christ Church University which supports the women's team.

Clifford said: "We have the women's Ashes later in the year which should fall during the school summer holiday.

"That's great, as hopefully we'll get some girls coming to watch, and maybe even encourage them to take the sport up."

With the Aussies in town, the financial rewards were good for the club too.

Clifford said: "We had a big crowd which exceeded expectations and we were lucky enough to do better than estimated from a financial point of view.

"We've got lots of emerging players many of whom want to play for England.

"Getting them an opportunity to play against the big name teams gives the players a great experience."

Ex-serviceman takes para-powerlifting gold

A FORMER soldier from Ashford who lost a leg in Afghanistan has become a champion para-powerlifter after winning gold.

Corporal Ross Austen lost his left leg above knee, and also sustained nerve damage to his right foot and leg when he was injured by an improvised explosive device while clearing a compound in Afghanistan.

The soldier – who served in the Royal Engineers – sustained the injury in November 2008. Last weekend at the Ricoh Arena in Coventry, Austen won gold in the heavy men's category of the British Para-Powerlifting Championship.

His hard work resulted in a best lift of 130kg at the event.

Sport has played a big part in the ex-serviceman's recovery, and he has been supported in his rehabilitation by charity Help for Heroes' Sports Recovery programme.

HEAVE: A lift of 130kg secured the title, and the gold for Austen

The charity says it is very proud to have supported the powerlifter. He was only recently discovered through British Weight Lifting and Help for Heroes' joint Pathway2Podium initiative. The scheme aims to uncover and introduce military personnel to paralympic sport.

Austen said: "It was a great weekend at the British Championships, I'm so happy to come away with the British title and a gold medal."

Martin Colclough, head of sports recovery at the charity, said: "What a fantastic result for Ross, who impressed everyone with his professional attitude and determination at the competition. After only a short time training specifically for this competition, we're looking forward to future competitions and continuing to support Ross on his journey."

Sport Shorts

» Email **sports@kosmedia.co.uk** or call **Jamie Weir** on **01233 653481**

Hess off to Orient as Gills look for assistant

GILLINGHAM were rocked after the club's assistant manager, Andy Hessenthaler, confirmed he would leave Priestfield for Leyton Orient.

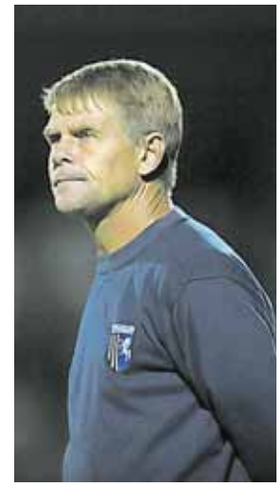
With links to the club spanning two decades, the 49-year-old said it had been a difficult decision to make,

He began his new contract with the League Two squad on Wednesday after announcing his departure at the beginning of the week.

Gills boss Edinburgh is rumoured to already have an idea of who he wants to bring in. Names said to be on the cards include current first team coach at the Gills, Steve Lovell, as well as Michael Flynn and Wayne Hatswell who both worked under Edinburgh at Newport County.

Hessenthaler told the club's website: "This was an incredibly difficult decision as I've had a 20 year relationship with Gillingham and I love the football club.

"I wish Justin, and everybody at the club, the very best of luck."



HESS: Off to pastures new after 20 year relationship with club

SHARE: The club is looking to involve the community in its running

Tonbridge Angels in the hunt for investors

TONBRIDGE Angels are making a big push following a successful launch of the club's fan ownership programme.

The Angels - who announced they would look to get community support in January this year - launched the drive at the tail end of the 2014-2015 season. After successfully bagging their 100th fan owner – a supporter of 20 years – the club are now pushing forward with plans to recruit more before the season kicks off.

Club chairman, Steve Churcher, said: "I'm delighted we have reached this landmark particularly during the summer months when football clearly will not be uppermost in people's minds. We shall of course be having a big drive to increase membership further as the new season starts to get underway."

Under the scheme the public can pick up a share in the club for £25 a year. For that investment, fans are able to vote on important decisions at the club, elect board members or even stand for the board themselves.

Edinburgh delight at Ehmer deal

GILLS defender Max Ehmer is set to make his return to Priestfield after inking a new three-year deal with the club.

He will return after impressing Gills gaffer Justin Edinburgh when he joined on loan from Queens Park Rangers last season.

Edinburgh said: "This is a great signing for us; I've made no secret of the fact that I had wanted Max to return if the opportunity came up and we have now reached an agreement.

"Max was an excellent performer during his time at the club last season and he will only get better over time. I'm delighted he is back with us and look forward to working with him once again."

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